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COVER: British MX2 champion Shaun Simpson sticks it in 'one more time'  
© **Sutty**

CONTENTS: Relentless Suzuki's Lewis Gregory guns it full-bore in Devon  
© **Sutty**



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# COMMENT

I had a chat at the Motocross des Nations with a guy who's pretty high up the pecking order when it comes to freelance work. Without giving too much away he's photographed the biggest names in GP racing – we're talking genuine bona fide legends who've actually, like, won stuff – in all sorts of weird and wonderful situations. So when he told me about an idea he had for a photoshoot with a certain 'star' rider and asked was I interested the answer was an immediate yes. But earlier this week when I spoke to him I was I tad p\*\*\*\*d off to hear that the rider in question was proving 'hard to pin down' and the shoot was off. Rock star mentality anyone?

It's not a common occurrence over here but according to Steve Cox, our man in the US, it's pretty much an everyday deal in America where big pay cheques and public adulation go to some riders' heads and they begin to get a bit, for want of a better expression, up themselves.

All of which made our cover shoot for this month's mag with Shaun Simpson an absolute blast of fresh air. Shaun's had a stellar season on the GP and domestic fronts, represented Team GB at the MXdN and earned himself a ride with Red Bull KTM for his efforts. In short, in the world of motocross he's also a 'star'.

When we set up the shoot with Shaun all we had to do was tell him where (Fat Cat Motopark) and when (10am on a Sunday morning). Sure enough, Team DBR rolled up at Martin Craven's splendid facility and barely had time to stuff down a greasy breakfast burger before Shaun's battered Sprinter pulled into the car park. We'd driven about 100 miles from Lancaster, Shaun had lead-footed it up the day before from Holland where he'd been testing his factory bike. He arrived in time to score some zzzzzzzs in his van in a nearby industrial estate and had popped into Tesco for his brekkie before meeting us.

He then spent almost a full day happily riding the same few corners over and over again, entertaining the Fat Cat regulars with some big whips, product testing an electric startgate for us and doing some fairly fearless skids and wheelies. In fact, it was us who called time on the photoshoot because we were cold!

Shaun's only recently achieved 'star' status but you know that a few years down the line – with possibly a couple of world titles under his belt – he's not going to turn into the sort of rider who demands fresh flowers in his truck and a man friend to pick out all the red Smarties...

As well as gracing the cover and filling nine pages inside this month's mag, Shaun's also up for four gongs in our 2008 DBR Awards alongside the likes of Billy MacKenzie, Tommy Searle, David Knight, James Stewart and Dougie Lampkin. It's going to be a totally democratic process and we want DBR readers to decide who gets the end-of-year accolades.

Turn to page 15 to check out the nominees and categories and then either rip the page out and post it off or – if you prefer to keep your copy intact – go online to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) to vote by clicking on the relevant boxes and hitting the send button. Voting closes on December 24 and we'll announce the winners in the New Year.

Sean



© Suttly  
Elliot Banks-Browne will be racing for LPE Kawasaki next season

## NEWSHOUND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S OFF-ROAD ROUND-UP...

It looks like British motocross will be missing a second top-flight team from the Maxxis and GP pits in 2009 as the Swift Suzuki squad have pulled the plug on their racing efforts after just two seasons of high-profile existence. The team was only formed by the motocross-mad Banks family late in 2006 but was undoubtedly one of the most professional looking and switched-on teams in the paddock.

In a press release the team state "negotiations had taken place between the principal team partners for the team to continue through the 2009 season but we were dealt a serious blow when the already agreed team leader Stephen Sword reneged on agreed terms and joined an alternative team for 2009".

This is something Swordy is quick to dismiss although it's no secret that the speedy Scotsman had been in serious negotiations with Swift. But regardless of what had or had not been agreed, the three-time British champ is now confirmed for a KTM UK ride alongside former Swift teamster Jake Nicholls while the Swift team have to put their plans of world domination on hold for one more year. Hopefully we'll see them back in 2010.

A surprise victim of the Banks family's decision to stop racing is family member Elliot Banks-Browne who the team was originally built around. With most of the GP teams already full Elliot has found salvation with the LPE Kawasaki squad that are successfully turning around the career of former crash happy youngster Jamie Smith who actually stayed upright long enough to make his MX1 GP debut in 2008.

Speaking of GPs and that, MXGP action returns to Hawkstone in 2009 as Gareth Hockey brings the opening round of the MX3 world champs to the Shropshire sandpit over the Easter weekend of April 11-12. With a real lack of star riders in the MX3 class next year and a date clash with an MX1/MX2 GP in Bulgaria – which basically means no British wildcards from either of those classes will race – Gareth is going all out to make the weekend a real celebration of off-road bikesport with more side attractions and freakshows than a Victorian circus.

The action is due to kick off on Good Friday with mountainbike and BMX racing before the dirt bikes bark into life for MX3 qualifying and high-flying FMX action on the Saturday. Sunday is race day and that should be a great chance for British-based non-GP

riders such as Brad Anderson, Wayne Smith and Mark Jones to score good points, win a home GP (Flamin' Moe Szyslak's lead one before) and potentially snatch the lead in the MX3 title chase from under the nose of the visiting Johnny Foreigners – how sweet would that be?

There's more GP-related news from Gareth in the form of a named venue for the MX1/MX2 GP that's due to run on May 30-31. Let's hope you enjoyed the racing at Mallory Park this year because that's where we're going back again in '09. Once more the Welsh ringmaster is giving us plenty of bang for our buck as he's also promoting a round of the supermoto world championship at the same venue on the same weekend!

That should be some top-notch Saturday evening entertainment although I feel it might push the Youthstream press officer Daniele Rizzi (who'll have double the workload that weekend) to the point of spontaneous combustion – ciao Dani, it was nice working with you.

Two weeks before the Mallory MX GP – May 17 – is Britain's round of the WTC which finds a new home in the UK at Nord Vue which is near Carlisle in Cumbria, eh. Mere minutes from the M6, the WTC event will be promoted by Dirtbike-Trax's John Kerwin who's better known for his awesome hare scrambles series.

If you fancy playing in a quarry with rocks then you'll be glad to know that entries are now open for one of the best off-road events annually held in the UK. WOR's The Tough One is all set to run on January 17 and if it's owt like the last four then it's gonna be frickin' fantastic.

After the customary opening clubman and speed trials races the Main Event is due to start at 2pm which means that for the first time since its inaugural running the Tough One will be held completely in daylight hours which should help make it more of a spectacle for the spectators who'll be able to see the skills of the riders instead of being blinded by their halogen headlights.

With no headlights needed, a three-grand prize pot lined up and Knighter reportedly entered in an old 5-Series Beamer (a signing-on sweetener from his new team – see [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) for more details) let's hope a few British championship motocross riders take up the challenge. Entry forms and more information can be found by logging on to [www.worevents.com](http://www.worevents.com)

# MINCEPIES!

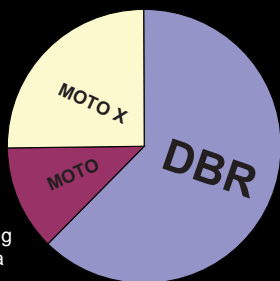
BREAK OUT THE BRANDY BUTTER

Christmas is coming and the goose (along with most of the DBR team) is getting fat – so how about another slice of pie to help with the old winter waistline insulation? And as we're sliding into the festive season we're forsaking our normal Jake and Sidney for something a little sweeter...

In our September issue we published a UK MX magazine sales pie-chart based on WHS News Wholesale marketshare estimates which showed we were miles ahead of Moto and MotoX with a whopping 57 per cent slice of the market. By complete coincidence, the latest figures just in are for that particular issue and show that compared with the September issues of Moto and MotoX we've increased our market share to a frankly quite greedy 62 per cent.

Obviously, we've got the actual sales figures for DBR but to maintain a level playing field we've used exactly the same data used to estimate Moto and MotoX sales. And this data comes straight from Seymour – the company that handles our distribution as well as the distribution for Moto and MotoX – so there's no bias.

Reet, where's the brandy butter? On second thoughts, screw the butter...



# WHERE'S CYRIL

FIND DESPRES AND WIN A SHARK LID

With Billy hooning it up in Thailand and Australia for the last five weeks it was going to be a bit tricky to find the CAS Honda man so we've done a bit of quick thinking, changed the star playing hide and seek and changed the prize n'all...

So for this month our bestest buddies at Nevis Marketing have stumped up a top-of-the-range Shark SXR Cyril Despres replica brain bucket worth a penny shy of 230 big ones for whoever can spot the fast Frenchie's disembodied head lurking somewhere in the pages of our December issue.

The deal's much the same as with Where's William only this time you need to text the word DBRCYRIL followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to 81800. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\*

Entries close on December 11 with the first correct entry chosen at random getting the Shark lid (don't worry, we'll give the winner a bell to get their size)...

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# WINNER!

Pete Fry, winner of our RM125 competition that ran through the summer months, recently collected his star prize from Robbie Robson of Trevor Pope Motorcycles down in Hampshire. What's more, the 40-year-old mad-keen off-roader then placed a call to DBR HQ to give us an update on his plans.

"I'm over the moon with it," says Pete. "I've run it in and it's just about ready to go now – I've got my frameguards and handguards on and I've got my first hare and hounds on it on November 9. It was a great day when I picked it up from Trevor Pope's – they really looked after me."

# GRIMBOGRABSGOLD!

JARVIS TAKES RECORD WIN IN THE EVENT THAT INSPIRED MOTOCROSS

Having grabbed the British title at the final round of this year's series, the tail end of Graham Jarvis' '08 season got even better when he won the world famous Scott Trial for a record-breaking eighth time.

This year's edition of the annual time and observation trial – the world's toughest event of its kind – was a star-studded affair with 12-time world champ Dougie Lampkin and factory Montesa star Takahisa Fujinami among the starters.

The Scott Trial is a big slice of off-road history and, arguably, was the inspiration for the sport of motocross. First run in 1914, the 84-mile blast across the North Yorkshire moors calls for a combination of balls-out speed and more traditional trials skills.

The fastest rider across the course sets 'standard time' with riders picking up an extra penalty for every minute they finish over this standard time. The marks they collect in the super-tough 76 sections are then added to their time penalties to decide the winner. But that's not all – finish two-and-a-half

hours slower than standard time and you're out. It sounds like a lot but of the 200 starters this year only 60 were classed as finishers – and 140 certainly didn't suffer mechanical or physical breakdowns.

It all went pear-shaped for Dougie early on this year when his Beta died underneath him after four sections while Future Montesa rider James Dabill scorched off into the distance to set standard time. But Grimbo – a world-class extreme enduro rider – was next man home just six minutes adrift and his total of 39 lost on observation compared to Dabill's 47 gave him the win by just two marks.

"I'm made up with taking my eighth win," says the MRS Sherco rider. "It's been a long time coming and I'd like to thank everyone that has helped me get this far and achieve what I have. It's been a great year and it could be my last at trials so it's nice to go out on a high note."

"Thanks again for everyone's support this year, especially Malcolm and Rhoda Rathmell."



Grimbo snapped at 'Surrender' – he didn't and took his eighth Scott Trial win

# HISTORY LESSON

THE FIRST MOTOCROSS

Back in the '20s a group of off-road enthusiasts decided they wanted to run their own version of the Scott Trial which they rather imaginatively christened the Southern Scott. So tough were conditions that at one point an onlooker was heard to say "bloody hell, that looks a bit of a scramble" (or words to that effect).

And so the Southern Scott became the world's first scramble! And 'scramble' eventually changed to 'motocross' from the French for 'motocycleeng across ze countree hawheehawheehaw'...



# WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

## RISK RACING HOESHOT RACE GATES >>

**G**etting a great start not only feels good but is also an important part of succeeding in the sport of motocross. There are many varying ideas on how to get the best jump from the gate but the truth is that different things work for different people and that's why practising your own starting technique and dialling it in is a necessity.

Until now practising starts has been a little bit difficult with good start training devices being few and far between. Risk Racing have sorted that problem though with their £250 Holeshoot Race Gate that's now available to buy through their website [www.riskracingeurope.com](http://www.riskracingeurope.com) or by calling **02892 699770** where they'll help you find your local dealer.

The Holeshoot is a completely randomly timed, wireless, battery-

powered practice startgate that allows riders to independently practice their starts. By pressing a wireless remote button – that can be mounted on their crossbar pad – a computer controlled timing sequence is activated which will drop the gate randomly.

After the remote button is pressed a green LED illuminates on the gate. This lets the rider know that the gate has received the signal and gives the rider two seconds to get his or her hands back on the bars. The LED will then turn red and start blinking. When it starts blinking it's like the five second board has been held up and the rider needs to get ready because the gate will now drop randomly between one and five seconds. Resetting the gate is easy and multiple gates can be electronically linked for bar-banging

practice with your buddies.

The Holeshoot also has an instant drop feature for use with your mechanic, a friend or family member so if you want to bypass the random timing sequence in order to control the drop sequence you can plug the remote button directly into the gate which will drop as soon as the button is pressed.

All in all the Risk Racing Holeshoot is a great bit of kit for people who need more holeshoots in their lives and so if you're one of those competitive souls who just has to gain even the smallest of advantages have we got a comp for you!

We've hooked up with Risk Racing Europe to offer two lucky readers the chance to win a Holeshoot Race Gate of their own. All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning the training device of

your dreams is to answer this question.

Which rider took the holeshoot at this year's Weston Beach Race (see page 123 for a clue)?

Was it: **A)** David Knight  
**B)** David Hasselhoff  
**C)** David Thorpe  
**D)** David Dickinson

Think you know the answer? Okay, now text the word **DBRGATE** followed by a space, your answer (either A, B, C or D), another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\* Entries close at noon on **December 12** with the first correct answer chosen totally at random after this date getting the swag!



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# DBR AWARDS 2008!

VOTE NOW FOR YOUR OFF-ROAD HEROES OF THE YEAR...

It's been a great year in the dirt and now we want you to let us know who you think have been the stand-out – and crash-out – stars of the 2008 season. Does Knighter get your vote as British Off-Road Personality of the Year? Is Billy MacKenzie your choice as Best British Motocross Racer – or, for that matter,

Crasher or the Year? Or maybe both?

Simply tick the box next to the nominee of your choice in all of the following categories or, if you like, add a choice of your own. Then fill in your personal information and pop it in the post to us as DBR Awards, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG.

Alternatively, go to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) and cast your vote online by ticking some boxes and clicking some buttons.

Our poll closes at noon on December 24 and we're planning to have some sort of star-studded bash down the local Maccy Ds in the New Year...

## BRITISH OFF-ROAD PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

David Knight ☐  
Tommy Searle ☐  
Billy MacKenzie ☐  
Stephen Sword ☐  
Dougie Lampkin ☐  
Shaun Simpson ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST BRITISH MOTOCROSS RACER

Billy MacKenzie ☐  
Tommy Searle ☐  
Shaun Simpson ☐  
Stephen Sword ☐  
Natalie Kane ☐  
Wayne Smith ☐  
Ray Rowson ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST BRITISH AMATEUR MOTOCROSS RACER

David Campbell ☐  
Phil Mercer ☐  
Brad O'Leary ☐  
Lee Dunham ☐  
Steven Clarke ☐  
Charlie Hollis ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST BRITISH YOUTH MOTOCROSS RACER

Scott Elderfield ☐  
Luke Hawkins ☐  
Jordan Goodwin ☐  
Edward Allingham ☐  
Ben Green ☐  
Max Anstie ☐  
Bradley Pocock ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST INTERNATIONAL MOTOCROSS RACER

James Stewart ☐  
Chad Reed ☐  
David Philippaerts ☐  
Tyla Rattray ☐  
Antonio Cairoli ☐  
Ryan Villopoto ☐  
Steve Ramon ☐  
Josh Coppins ☐  
Other: .....

## CRASHER OF THE YEAR

Billy MacKenzie ☐  
Tommy Searle ☐  
Shaun Simpson ☐  
Dougie Lampkin ☐  
Stephen Sword ☐  
Jake Nicholls ☐  
Jamie Smith ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST FEMALE RACER

Natalie Kane ☐  
Ashley Fiolek ☐  
Livia Lancelot ☐  
Steffi Laier ☐  
Tarah Geiger ☐  
Hannah McLeod ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST FMX RIDER

Nate Adams ☐  
Mat Rebaud ☐  
Dany Torres ☐  
Kyle Loza ☐  
Jeremy Stenberg ☐  
Robbie Maddison ☐  
Chris Birch ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST INTERNATIONAL OFF-ROAD RACER

Paul Whibley ☐  
Taddy Blazusiak ☐  
Mika Ahola ☐  
Ivan Cervantes ☐  
Juha Salminen ☐  
Cyril Despres ☐  
Johnny Aubert ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST BRITISH OFF-ROAD RACER

David Knight ☐  
Graham Jarvis ☐  
Jason Thomas ☐  
Paul Edmondson ☐  
Tom Sagar ☐  
Euan McConnell ☐  
Paul Bolton ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST INTERNATIONAL TRIALS RIDER

Toni Bou ☐  
Adam Raga ☐  
Takahisa Fujinami ☐  
Jeroni Fajardo ☐  
Albert Cabestany ☐  
Geoff Aaron ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST BRITISH TRIALS RIDER

James Dabill ☐  
Graham Jarvis ☐  
Dougie Lampkin ☐  
Jack Challoner ☐  
Alexz Wigg ☐  
Shaun Morris ☐  
Michael Brown ☐  
Other: .....

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Shaun Simpson ☐  
Jason Thomas ☐  
Jack Challoner ☐  
Tom Church ☐  
Ray Rowson ☐  
Jake Nicholls ☐  
Other: .....

## BEST BRITISH EVENT OF 2008

Scottish Six Day Trial ☐  
Motocross des Nations ☐  
Weston Beach Race ☐  
Scott Trial ☐  
British Motocross GP ☐  
WEC GP of Wales ☐  
Other: .....

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# GORDON CROCKARD

## FROWN UNDER!

GORDY SHOULD BE RACING SX IN SYDNEY BUT FOR REASONS BEYOND HIS CONTROL HE'S HOME IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND QUIETLY FUMING...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

I could have at one point been sending this into DBR HQ from Sydney, Australia, as I was very close to being there today. At present there is a brand new SX series being run Down Under and I was all set to go and do it for the last four rounds throughout November.

Chad Reed is involved in the organisation of it and is also riding it and Jeremy McGrath is doing the last two rounds. My mechanic from the 2001 season Steve Brady is working and living in Brisbane and he had arranged a bike for me to race from the dealership network where he works. My BMW USA team-mate Glenn Kearney has just returned home to Sydney as well so I had intended on meeting up with him and Shane Watts to do some bush riding. All of this was going to tie in nicely with the fact that my girlfriend Amy is currently there spending time with her brother who resides in Sydney. I was going to get to wipe out a lot of big birds with one stone as they say.

Anyways, I'm not able to go due to reasons beyond my control. If I were to write why then for sure I would get an award for the world's best case of 'drying your dirty laundry in public' – I'm bad enough for that trait among my personal circle of friends so I'm certainly not going to fall victim to doing it in a nationwide magazine! I might still get to go for a leisure pleasure trip but the plan to race SX while there is gone. 'Next year, next year' I'm having to tell myself when I get cross about missing out this time.

My headache from the MXdN went away eventually and I was back on the bike – maybe too soon – doing some racing while I had the chance. Since I had such fun at the Gothenburg SX in September, when I was asked to go to race one of the last rounds of the Swedish MX championship I said 'yeah' and found myself there the weekend after the MXdN. The weather was shocking. I couldn't believe they ran the race and I couldn't believe I actually rode it. My results were garbage and didn't feel safe on the track.

The next weekend I drove the five-hour run down to Cork in Southern Ireland to try and teach a few guys a better way to motocross. The weather was mega and the former GP track at Vernon Mount was in top shape. I showed them what I knew and I was rewarded with a great sense of achievement when I could see the apparent improvements. I discovered a whole new world of fun in Cork as I sampled the city centre for nightlife on the trip. The people are spot on and the atmosphere in the bars is superb.

I went to Canada Heights to race in the Pro Open class at the MC Events-organised Youth Elite Cup and was super-impressed with how dry the track was and how cool the whole meeting was run. I was fastest in qualifying and had a strong desire to win both motos to take home the prize money and remind the rest of the

pack why I'm a three-time British champion. Well, in the end I didn't win but I nearly did with second in the first race and fourth in the second for third overall. My concrete starts were embarrassing! Plus I fell in the second race too trying too hard to catch up. I handed the trophies out at the end of the day before rushing to Stansted to catch the flight home.

Sheffield Supercross was my next weekend fun and this time I drove over with my van so I could give my practice bike back to the PAR team. The ferry out of Belfast to Liverpool was to depart at 10.30pm and arrive in at 6.30am. Then it was just a matter of driving a couple of hours to Sheffield to make the event in good time and see the track, my bike and get some groceries in the van so I could have something to eat.

Well, the damn Irish Sea was super-rough and the ferry couldn't sail until after 1am and it eventually docked at 10am after a hideously rough sailing through the night. I hardly slept and woke up feeling like pure dung in a panic about missing practice. I drove flat-out across to Sheffield to try and make it for practice and was thrown even more time delays in my path as a coach had caught fire on the motorway and brought us to a standstill for nearly an hour. I was bouncing. Couldn't afford the time to stop for any groceries so eating was going to be grim. I didn't get to see the track before practice but did make it out for some laps before qualifying heats kicked off in the afternoon.

I had some wins in my qualifiers and ended up with third in the British Open and seventh in the SX1 final. To be honest I was done in with the way the whole day had gone in terms of not really sleeping or eating and then racing two groups. On Sunday my system rebelled and I got a cold which nearly killed me for a week.

On Sunday morning Stena Line rang me to tell me that the HSS from Stranraer to Belfast had had a small crash and was too damaged to sail so all sailings that day were cancelled. They gave me the option of going home from Holyhead to Dublin so that's what we did.

After a week in bed dead with the cold I was pleased to make the effort to go to Kilbrony for the Irish championship trial they ran on Saturday. I hadn't been on the Montesa since Boxing Day and knew I would get smoked by the regular trials riders. I didn't care though and enjoyed most of the sections.

This weekend coming I'm flying over to do a schoolboy club presentation in Northampton and from my friends who live in that area and know the club I predict it being a good night.

Right then, that's just about enough of an insight into my personal life as I'm prepared to give you today. Take it easy and maybe see you at the Stoneleigh Show?



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#### EDITOR

Sean Lawless  
sean.lawless@dirtbikerider.co.uk  
Tel: 01524 834077  
Fax: 01524 425469

#### DEPUTY DAWG

Anthony Sutton  
anthony.sutton@dirtbikerider.co.uk

#### ART EDITOR

Andrew Marginson  
andrew.marginson@dirtbikerider.co.uk

#### DESIGN

Graham Austin  
Gary Houghrain

#### US EDITOR

Steve Cox  
www.coxmx.com

#### TECHNICAL EDITOR

Geoff Walker  
geoffwalkerdb@aol.com

#### YOUTH EDITOR

Mike Gurney  
mike@ragextra.co.uk

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Jonty Edmunds, Stevie Mills, Roger Harvey, Stephen Sword, Gordon Crockard, Billy MacKenzie, Alex Hodgkinson, Jack Burnicle, Alan Milway, Steve Matthes, JP O'Connell, Max Anstie, EK, Adam Duckworth, Paul Harris, Ian Roxburgh

#### NEW MEDIA MANAGER

Jude Oakley

#### CLASSIFIED ORIGINATION

Stuart Box, Richard Harrison and David Chu

#### COMMERCIAL MANAGER

Debs Stuchbury  
debs.stuchbury@dirtbikerider.co.uk  
01524 834007

#### MARKETING AND CIRCULATION MANAGER

Richard Wilkinson  
richard.wilkinson@dirtbikerider.co.uk  
01524 834013

#### ADVERTISING

Phil Armitage  
phil.armitage@dirtbikerider.co.uk  
01524 834012

#### ADMIN MANAGER

Sarah Hodgkinson

#### MERCHANDISING AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Anne Pardula  
www.dirtbikerider.co.uk  
01524 834030

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Lancashire  
LA4 4AG

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## STEPHEN SWORD

### PARTY TIME!

SWORDY'S OFF-SEASON IS JUST ABOUT COMING TO AN END BUT THERE'S STILL TIME TO LET HIS HAIR DOWN BEFORE THE HARD WORK STARTS ALL OVER AGAIN...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutti

The last time I wrote my column it was just before the des Nations at Donington. I attended a Kawasaki dealer day at the circuit on the Friday before the action kicked off – TC and I had to just be there and mingle with the dealers for most of the day. I caught up with some old faces that I had not seen for a while so that was nice to catch up with them and have a laugh.

I didn't stay to watch on Saturday but drove up on Sunday morning with Jodie. I'm not the best at watching as I always like to be racing but we both had a nice time. I spent a lot of the day at the Fox hospitality where they looked after us well and watched the racing from the Red Bull stand in the middle of the track. The racing was good I thought, shame we did not make the podium in the end.

The week after the des Nations Jodie and I decided to share our great news as the season was over that Jodie is pregnant with our first baby through IVF. We are over the moon and cannot believe that he or she will be with us on May 1. Due to Jodie having to be under special care with the consultant we were unable to go on holiday so instead we decided to spend a few days at a spa.

We went to a place called the Grove – what amazing grounds and I was able to get a day of golf in on the course. It's a championship course so you can imagine how well maintained it was, the best course I have ever played on. The spa was out of this world and had a black pool which freaked Jodie out! I had a hot stone treatment which was well worth the money – I was so relaxed after! Everything about the break was perfect except it was only from Friday through to Monday but, hey, the baby will be worth it.

Huck had his 30th birthday party and with Huck being Huck invitations were sent by text saying 'bring your own drink' – now why does that not surprise me! It was fancy dress so the day before I had to go to Giggles and sort out what I was going to wear. I decided on Austin Powers – they even gave me the teeth so I was well kitted out. It was a good night and everyone really made the effort with their costumes which made the party even better when you're all

getting drunk and trying to act in character! There was also a wet t-shirt competition – Huck's choice of course! The winner was my mechanic from this year Ryan as he went to a charity shop and dressed as an old woman – he did look funny and scarily played the character well. Overall, it was a great night and the great thing I have found about Jodie being pregnant is she's an awesome taxi driver! Thanks Huck – another great party as always!

It was also one of my best mate's birthdays. Neil's a top bloke and we all got together for a day riding. I borrowed his KTM – it was just a standard bike but it felt great and I adapted to it quick. Even though it was a wet day it has made me even more eager for riding next year. It was Ryan's birthday too so in the evening they decided to go out in Bristol and celebrate in style. It was a great turn-out and I knew it would be my last night drinking for at least a year so I was up for getting a bit messy.

I thought it would be really clever to do the caterpillar through the bar along with others doing handstands – thank god Neil knew the owners or else I'm sure we would have been kicked out. It was a good night but in the morning I wasn't feeling too great so I'm glad that training is about to begin next week.

Although I love the off-season and you do need a break from racing I do find I get bored and miss staying in shape. I ate so much ice cream and drank a fair bit of booze so I don't think I'll miss it for the next year! I have been playing a lot of golf – if you read my column you'll know how much I love it – and I am getting better but now I am back training I won't really have the time. I think that is the main thing I will miss most about the off-season.

I have some presentations to do which I enjoy as you get to meet the kids who dedicate their weekends to MX – they remind me of how I was as a kid. It is such a great sport for them as it gives them a hobby and dedication while keeping them fit and out of trouble.

Hope to see you all at the Dirt Bike Show...

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# THE COMMENTATOR

IT'S THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD AND ALSO – IF YOU READ WHAT THEY SAY ON THE INTERNET – A POISONED CHALICE...

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

If you can't make it to the races then TV commentary can either make 'em or break 'em and if you look at some of the internet forums it seems that the microphone can be something of a poisoned chalice – so we tracked down a man who isn't scared to take a sip! Step forward Eurosport's very own Roger Warren...

**DBR:** Introduce yourself to us Roger...

**RW:** "I have a nine to five job during the week working for Scottish and Southern Energy but at the weekends I have the best job in the world which is that of a motocross commentator."

**DBR:** How long have you been commentating on motocross?

**RW:** "It started at the Ken Hall Trophy back in 2000 so I'm now in my eighth year. I was asked to interview some of the sidecar teams on the startline which was quite an education as not many of them spoke any English! From there I was spotted and asked to go over to the Isle of Wight for a Maxxis round and was subsequently asked to do a few more the following year, including a few GPs. After that there was an opening at Eurosport and through Honda UK's Roger Harvey I got that and it just goes on from there."

**DBR:** Could you see this becoming your day job?

**RW:** "Unfortunately it only lasts for six months of the year so I have to keep my normal job! At the end of the day though, as a motocross fan it's the best job in the world – I get the best seat in the house, I get to talk to all the star riders and I get paid for the privilege of doing it."

**DBR:** Do you have a history of riding motocross yourself?

**RW:** "I was a typical rubbish solo rider and then I met up with some sidecar lads and did a few years racing as a passenger where I was slightly less rubbish! Like most commentators I was rubbish doing it so I spend my time talking about it."

**DBR:** On a scale of one to 10 how difficult is it to call a race on live TV?

**RW:** "It's the same as most things in life

– if you do your homework then it makes your job much easier. I read all the magazines and websites so I know exactly who has been doing what and if you've got that background knowledge then hopefully it flows when you see it on TV. As a commentator it's best not to read chat forums and things as you're on a hiding to nothing, you can't please everybody!"

**DBR:** We have to ask this – are you seeing exactly the same footage as we're seeing on our TVs as occasionally rather important events in the race seem to be overlooked?

**RW:** "To be fair I probably see less than you as I have to watch it on a 12" monitor as well as looking at a timing screen on a computer. You can guarantee that if someone is going to crash or make a pass it's when you're checking the timing screen and that's why we may not talk about something that's just happened."

**DBR:** This season we've heard commentators refer to Max Nagl as Nadal, Barragan as Bagarran, Seb Pourcel as Steve... Do you practice the pronunciation of the riders' names?

**RW:** "I'm the same as you in that I will sit at home and cringe sometimes. I will always try to make sure I get it right and will speak to the riders to ensure that I do have it right, out of courtesy to them more than anything."

**DBR:** What is the trick to keeping your audience entertained?

**RW:** "Practice and experience really. If you start off your commentary at 100 miles an hour then you will lose a bit of emphasis when something dramatic does happen – if you are enthusiastic and excited by the racing then that will come across. I try not to talk just to the motocross fans, especially on TV, as some people will be channel hopping and won't have a clue what's going on so I try to give some background as well as following what's happening in the race."

**DBR:** Are you physically at every round of the GPs that you commentate on or do you sometimes watch a live feed and commentate from that?

**RW:** "It varies – some you are at the circuit and some are done from a studio. We have a few tricks we can use if we are working from a studio to make the job a little easier – I can't say what they are or I'll be drummed out of the commentators' union!"

**DBR:** Do you work alone in the commentary booth or do you have someone to help you?

**RW:** "Mainly because of financial constraints I'll be alone so we'll try to bring in an injured rider to help out. I've dragged in Paul Malin and Stephen Sword before because these guys can bring something extra to the party that's for sure – they will see things that I would never see."

**DBR:** Do you have a script at all?

**RW:** "No, we have a headphone where the producer can tell us when ad breaks are coming up but other than that it's all ad-libbed."

**DBR:** "We should start calling Barragan butter as he's on such a roll!" Surely you got that one from a Christmas cracker?

**RW:** (Laughing) "Now I don't mind admitting that I heard someone else come out with that one – I'll steal good lines from anybody!"

**DBR:** What's a commentator's worst nightmare?

**RW:** "We had a good one a couple of GPs ago – when the five-second board dropped my screen went blank. I didn't know if it was just my screen so I kept talking as best I could."

**DBR:** What's been your most embarrassing cock up?

**RW:** "At Matchams a couple of years back Carl Nunn crashed in the first turn. I said that the clerk of the course had the red flag in his hand, the marshals on the back of the circuit heard this and waved the riders off the track – in hindsight perhaps I should have mentioned that he hadn't unrolled it!"

**DBR:** How annoying is it that while we're being shown a seemingly random battle for 17th place on TV, first and second

swap positions and third has gone down?

**RW:** "You have to remember that sometimes the director will be based in that particular country and will tend to focus on their own riders and ignore what's happening elsewhere. What was more annoying was during the Everts era when you would see 35 minutes of him riding 20 seconds ahead of everything else that was happening."

**DBR:** Which stands out as the best race you've commentated on?

**RW:** "Best event was Motocross of Nations at Matterley Basin in '06 – best atmosphere, best crowd, best racing. Best race was Desertmartin GP in '06 when Coppins and Everts went at it hammer and tongs for both races."

**DBR:** Have you ever suffered a mental block and not been able to think of anything to say?

**RW:** "Foxhill British championship this year, doing the presentation on the podium and Zach Osborne is there – do you think I could remember his name? I wanted to call him Jason Lawrence! What can you do? I just had to try and work my way around it."

**DBR:** Do you commentate on any other sports?

**RW:** "I did a stint on Moto GP for Eurosport last weekend which was enjoyable. I enjoy Superbike and Moto GP but motocross is my first love."

**DBR:** Tell us your best road trip story?

**RW:** "Back in my sidecar days going to an international we drove off the boat in Calais and the gearstick snapped off. We jammed two screwdrivers into the gearbox, one for first and second and the other for third, fourth and fifth – we got to Bordeaux and back like that!"

**DBR:** You say how well a rider is doing and immediately he falls off – do you believe in the commentators' curse?

**RW:** "Every time! I publicly apologise to Billy Mac here and now because I've done it to him about six times this year. My record is three in one race – I said how well they were doing and all of them came off!"

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mano o mano

# HONDAHOMBRES!

FOR THIS MONTH'S INTERROGATION IT'S THE TURN OF MARTIN HONDA'S MARC DE REUVER AND JULIEN BILL...

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

**I**t's always a pleasure to be invited into the Martin Honda camp for some tasty pastries and extra strong espresso and with riders Marc De Reuver and Julien Bill on hand there are plenty of laughs as well – although leading them into the last turn wouldn't be nearly as funny...

**DBR:** Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

**MDR:** "Jim Carrey."

**JB:** "Will Smith."

**DBR:** When did you last clean an air filter?

**MDR:** "Clean the filter! Oh that would be back in my youth time, around 2000."

**JB:** "Wow that was a long time ago, I think it was at the beginning of '08 when I was at home training alone."

**DBR:** Could you check your own valve clearances?

**MDR:** (Pause) "What! No never! I know where they are but I can't do anything with them."

**JB:** "No, for sure no, I'm not a mechanic!"

**DBR:** Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

**MDR:** "Not that I killed myself but rabbit and deer that a friend killed. I tried to shoot a dove but I missed and then all the birds were gone!"

**JB:** "No never."

**DBR:** How many bones have you broken?

**MDR:** "Four – ankle, neck, leg and hip."  
**JB:** "Okay now let me check – collar, foot, hand and shoulder."

**DBR:** How many and where are your tattoos?

**MDR:** "None."

**JB:** "Yes I have one on my left shoulder of the Taurus bull."

**DBR:** It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the final corner for the win?

**MDR:** "Oh yeah, immediately, I wouldn't even think about it [laughing] – that's a sure thing that one!"

**JB:** "Yeah, for sure!"

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

**MDR:** "A Honda Civic, a snail car! Last year I had a BMW M5 but then I bought a house and when my accountant came to see me it was like 'okay, the car has to go'."

**JB:** "A 3 series BMW."

**DBR:** If money was no object what car would you drive?

**MDR:** "A Bugatti Veyron, 16 cylinders, 1000hp and over 1 million Euros!"

**JB:** "Something like a Lamborghini I think."

**DBR:** What is your favourite food?

**MDR:** "Anything that's greasy, I like the kebab and the pizza!"

**JB:** "I'd say it's Italian and Japanese."

**DBR:** Which is your favourite motocross track?

**MDR:** "For racing it would be Lierop because I ride well there but it's not nice. For just play riding then Donington GP track from last year."

**JB:** "I have a few but my favourite would be Asti in Italy – uphill, downhill and pretty nice ground."

**DBR:** What's your ideal holiday?

**MDR:** "I've never been on holiday...well one time to Spain with a caravan, so I wouldn't know. No hang on a minute it would be Iceland for the girls – I've seen some things in magazines...ooooohhhh!"

**JB:** "That would be on an island with a motocross track and my girlfriend."

**DBR:** Have you ever been arrested and why?

**MDR:** "Yes, two years ago for drink driving in my M5. I spent three hours in the cell and then I was able to leave because I was back under the limit."

**JB:** "No never."

**DBR:** What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

**MDR:** "Oh I s\*\*t my pants one time! Not because I was so drunk but because I thought I was going to make a fart, you know? I spent the rest of the night with no underwear!"

**JB:** "I've never really been drunk – well actually after a supercross I ended up drunk but that wasn't my fault, it was my friends adding a little 'extra' to my drinks."

**DBR:** What's your favourite band?

**MDR:** "I like 50 Cent – he's cool."

**JB:** "I like lots of music but I really like Linkin Park and Evanescence."

**DBR:** What's your best pick-up line?

**MDR:** "Maybe 'you look so good' because you know I am drunk before I will talk to them."

**JB:** "I don't have a special technique, it depends on the situation! I'm not too keen for that, I let them come to me – you take no risk then!"

**DBR:** How many sit-ups can you do?

**MDR:** "Quite a lot. Push-ups nothing but sit-ups maybe 50 or 60."

**JB:** "I've never tried a maximum – maybe two or three hundred."

**DBR:** How long would you have to be seeing a girl before you would cut the cheese in front of her?

**MDR:** "About one hour! I would ask if it was okay and if she said no I would do it anyway – big ones man!"

**JB:** (Laughing) "I don't know...maybe two months?"

**DBR:** What's your favourite film?

**MDR:** "Scarface."

**JB:** "Bad Boys."

**DBR:** Where is the craziest place you have had to answer nature's call during your travels?

**MDR:** "In Russia I took a p\*\*s against the bar!"

**JB:** "Nothing special, just the side of the road."

**DBR:** Do you have any fears or phobias?

**MDR:** "Oh yeah, heights."

**JB:** "Yes, I really hate snakes and I have a fear of heights – saying that I would really like to try parachuting!"

**DBR:** What's the most embarrassing article of clothing you own?

**MDR:** "I have a black shiny blazer and inside the lining is covered in roses. I also

have a shirt to match."

**JB:** "I always buy clothing that I really like so I don't really have anything too embarrassing."

**DBR:** Can you cook and if so what's your signature dish?

**MDR:** "Yeah, I like to cook a chicken and bacon salad."

**JB:** "I can but only simple stuff like eggs and pasta."

**DBR:** What's your most prized possession?

**MDR:** "My mobile phone."

**JB:** "Probably my car."

**DBR:** Blonde or brunette?

**MDR:** "That depends on how they look but usually blonde."

**JB:** "I'd say brunette for me."

**DBR:** Favourite race you've been in?

**MDR:** "Last year in Lierop – before it I was so demotivated I wanted to quit."

**JB:** "Namur last year when I got on the podium and also des Nations last year at Budds Creek."

**DBR:** Have you ever been in a fight and if so did you win?

**MDR:** "At primary school I always used to win but since then I don't fight so much."

**JB:** "Yeah often as a kid – I didn't always win but did mostly."

**DBR:** How fast can you down a pint?

**MDR:** "I don't drink beer, just Bacardi and Coke."

**JB:** "I don't drink so I don't know."

**DBR:** Is winning a race better than sex?

**MDR:** "Yeah, being on the podium that is nice."

**JB:** "It depends which race – if you win a GP then, yeah, it's better."

**DBR:** Who is your sporting hero?

**MDR:** "Mario Cipollini the Italian cyclist."

**JB:** "Valentino Rossi."

**DBR:** Tell us something about yourself that no-one else knows?

**MDR:** "I'm so open there is nothing..."

**JB:** "When I am alone in my car I am always singing wide open!"

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# DOWN TO THE WIRE!

IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL THE FAT LADY SINGS – AND SHE HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THE FINAL ROUND OF THE PREMIER SERIES BEFORE SHE COULD START BELTING OUT A TUNE...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

**B**y the time you get your paws on this month's DBR we'll already be well into the run up for Christmas. Oh yes, the festivities and office parties are only days away. It never ceases to amaze me how brilliantly people conduct themselves at such gatherings – CCTV should be compulsory at office parties and end-of-season prize-giving nights.

And it was a relief to thousands of kids in Ireland that Santa did not apply for insolvency protection – or indeed a Government share option bail out – as we approach the 'spending quarter'. Gone are the days when notes to Santa were put up the chimney – the bearded bloke now receives 'instruction to deliver' by email from laptops.

The racing in the 2008 Irish championship series was as frantic at the final round as it was at round one and with both Premier classes still up for grabs the last battle for series honours around the testing Donamanagh sand track provided a shock or two!

Wayne Garrett added the Irish MX1 crown to his Ulster MX1 class title and both titles successfully defended from the previous season were just reward after an extremely testing time for the Comber-based plasterer. A season-long tug of war for the #1 plate with Stuart Edmonds went down to the wire with a couple of early-season DNFs taking their toll on the young Dubliner's final points count.

Controversy and motocross go pretty much hand-in-hand and the end of 2008 was no less controversial. It came as a big surprise in some quarters when Wayne arrived at the final Ulster championship meeting and rolled out aboard KTM machinery. Citing irreconcilable differences, both Wayne and Team Moto One by TAS bossman Philip McCullough were equally unimpressed with how this season ended.

Congratulations to Graeme Irwin on collecting both Irish and Ulster MX2 silverware. The talented 16-year-old has again signed to stay with Team Moto One by TAS for 2009 and is looking forward to upping his game in the British championship stakes. Robert Hamilton made an appearance riding yellow machinery out of the Moto One camp at the final race of the year. If rumour is correct, Hammy will partner up under the McC awning which hopefully will see a return to form for the ex-Ulster champion.

For my sins I am winging my way to the Dirt Bike Show this year. I've never made it to the Stoneleigh show before and am really looking forward to it, especially getting together with the DBR brigade and meeting up with the Cologne crew again.

I travelled to the Intermot motorcycle fair in Germany last month and it was an experience that left me a little in awe of just how behind the game we are on this wee island of ours when it comes to public service and transport. I've figured out just why it is that Germans always seem to be a little pushy, arrogant and loud on holiday. It's because they do not give or receive second rate service at home...

Anyway, the Cologne show itself was fantastic with all of the world's top manufacturers showing their latest products from bikes to every conceivable go-faster part you may or indeed may never need in your entire off-road life. Day one of the extravaganza saw the GOMX and Fro Systems trade delegation embark on a

culture study resulting in Nightman drinking way too much beer!

As 2009 approaches nostalgia is setting in and – to me at least – it's becoming apparent that motocross has changed beyond all recognition from when I wringed the neck of my '78 YZ125 around the New Road track in Lisburn. Yes, it's official, I am now well over the

very existence of our tracks.

And why is it that so many more riders seem to be getting seriously hurt these days? A certain percentage must be attributed to just how well made and fast these modern day motocross bikes are – in short, modern stock bikes are better equipped to win motos than 99 per cent of their pilots. So what's the answer?

**Seriously swift 16-year-old Graeme Irwin is sticking with Team Moto One by TAS for '09**



age of consent and just slightly younger than your average dinosaur.

Change is inevitable but not necessarily for the best – enter the age of the modern warhorse, the four-stroke motocrosser. Along with its user-friendly attributes, it was not long before we learned just why these magnificent works of art are nicknamed 'four-bangers'! Sold as the eco-friendly way to off-road riding in the future, the four-strokes have brought with them many issues such as big bills for engine rebuilds while the increased noise pollution threatens the

We need to look long and hard at why we all got involved in motocross in the first place – when it used to be affordable fun with tracks that were tight and more natural, not full of flat-out fifth-gear jumps. Current economics may well play into the hands of a resurgence towards two-stroke machinery over the next year or so and I hope that in the long term we will see the return of the stokers to club level racing – there's nothing that compares to the sweet smell of two-stroke oil. Bring it on!

*Stevie*  
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*First the WEC got extreme tests – now it's being lined up for floodlit prologues*

## FRIDAY NIGHT FEVER!

FRIDAY NIGHT PROLOGUES ARE SET TO ADD A LITTLE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP FLAVOUR TO THE WEC IN '09 – BUT WILL ANY ORGANISERS BOTHER AND WILL THEY BE A GOOD THING FOR THE ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP?

Words and photo by **Jonty Edmunds**

If there's one thing that goes almost unnoticed every year it's the annual end-of-season FIM congress. Held in 2008 in Durban, South Africa, the yearly gathering of motorcycle sport bigwigs is normally only of importance because it's there that the dates for next year's world championships are confirmed. With official documentation from the event often about as exciting as a party political broadcast, this year things were a little different. It's actually generated one or two points of real interest.

It seems that the 'doing things differently' craze that has swept through international motorsport during the past 12 months and seen numerous major two and four-wheel championships experimenting with night races has reached the World Enduro Championship. No, there aren't any plans for a night WEC event – that would be extremely difficult for organisers and competitors alike – but the green light has been given for the world's premier enduro series to, well, think outside the box a little.

From 2009 onwards – and thanks, if that's the correct word, must go to WEC series promoter Alain Blanchard for this – the FIM are allowing organisers of World Enduro Championship events to set up timed prologues on the Friday night before events. They must be held between 7pm and 10pm, must be at least one-and-a-half minutes long but no longer than three minutes and if held at night must be artificially illuminated. They will be considered as the first special tests and be part of the classification of the first day.

What Alain Blanchard wants is WRC-style pre-event prologues that will attract spectators. He makes no attempt to hide the fact that he's copying what the WRC do. What's good about the fact that the FIM have

agreed to his request is that they have showed that they are open to fresh ideas and in doing so aren't against change. What's wrong with it? Well, potentially a lot of things.

When extreme tests were introduced they were met, rightly so, with scepticism. Personally speaking, 90 per cent of extreme tests are slow-speed, boring timed stages that make the world's best look like amateurs which is anything but a good thing for the WEC. Many of the world's top riders spoke out about them when they were introduced but today, thankfully, while they still exist they have improved. They aren't as extreme in many cases as they once were which makes them fairer and more interesting to watch.

The major problem during the early years of extreme tests was often that organisers spent too much time creating ridiculous man-made challenges and as a result often marked out sub-standard enduro and motocross tests. With 2009 the first year during which prologues are permitted my concern is that some clubs will get a little carried away with the idea and forget about firstly making sure they have the best enduro and motocross special tests.

The second thing I don't understand is how the WEC will benefit. As any member of a club that has organised a WEC event will tell you, there's more than enough to think about without having to worry about a prologue. They're not compulsory which means no-one knows how many clubs, if any, will exercise their option to run one.

Finally – and this is just bloody stupid – the FIM have said that... 'this prologue can consist of a special test, a cross test, an extreme test or type supermoto'. A supermoto? Are they nuts? Think about it. A round of

the WEC can now start on a Friday with a supermoto special test 100 per cent on asphalt. Not only do the world's best enduro riders get to make themselves look like beginners riding at 5mph around an extreme test, they might now have to race on wet asphalt.

The results from the prologue will also determine the starting order for the following day. So if a rider with genuine world championship aspirations has his chain derail – remembering that the prologue might be held in the dark under floodlights – he starts last in his class on the first day. From that position winning will be extremely difficult and might even prevent him from winning a world title he rightly deserves.

I'm not completely against the idea. I can see that it has the potential to be a good thing for the WEC. But I can also see it being an idea that only the biggest and best-funded clubs will grab hold of and run with. The only real benefit I can see is that prologues will generate some much needed funding for clubs. With a little thought the prologue could be the centrepiece of a two or three-hour Friday night show that people would be prepared to pay for. Mix the world's best enduro riders doing their thing with fireworks, music, food, beer, a warm-up act of some description, wet t-shirt competitions and a few additional ingredients that would ensure 'a night' is made of it and it could be one of the best things to happen to the WEC in recent years.

What I can see happening is a Friday night special test that few riders will want to compete in and few organisers will want to bother with. But, more so, if the public are going to be allowed to watch FOC what's the point? This is enduro's golden opportunity to finally get their hands on gate money which until now has never been available.

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## MXdN #1



What a great MXdN! Acceptable weather, entertainment, good facilities, great atmosphere (especially that Saturday night campsite party – cheers guys!) and, of course, the action on the track. It was a great weekend for sure.

However a bit of a downer was put on the experience when myself and my buddy Fro returned to the campsite on Sunday evening expecting to put our tent away only to discover that some complete loser had had it away! Even the rubbish inside! The pegs, the bags, the whole flippin' lot! So I just wanted to say thank you to those kind souls and to inform them that is the kind of image that deters outsiders to convert to our amazing passion. You are not welcome!

**Strippy, Dorset**

PS The joke's on you dorks because I bust the zip for the front door early Sunday morning while being overly-hydrated.

*That sucks Strippy. We've not heard any similar tales from the MXdN but it stinks to know stuff like that goes on. You're right, dorks like that are not welcome. Have a pair of Etnies on us to make up for it mate – just don't go leaving them in your tent!*

## DK FAN!

Just to say I think this mag is great and I get it every month. Also just to say Knighter was awesome at Weston. I help do the recovery which my dad runs and we helped him get to the finish on the quads and managed to get his autograph and a picture with him. He said he would give us his gloves after the main race but when we went to his truck he wasn't there so do you reckon you could get them for us?

**Justin, Devon**

*Sorry Justin, we can't get a pair of Knighter's massive paw-protectors for you – you'll have to make do with some Muc-Off!*

## MXdN #2

Worst Motocross of Nations I've ever been to. The riders for a start did no signing for the kids and the Americans hid behind the Fox tent. The viewing of the track was terrible and with drunks and drug smoking everywhere not a place for my kids. The whole day was done for TV and the press, not the fans.

**Ciaran, Kent**

*To be fair we thought the viewing was a lot better this time around compared to last year's GP but it still wasn't ideal and Team USA were a little 'rock star'. You'll never stop fans drinking but drug smoking is totally unacceptable – sorry you and your family didn't have a great Motocross des Nations experience...*

## MXdN #3

Having got to the track at Donington around 10pm I was a little dismayed to find only two people selling tickets but once I finally got the tickets I headed off to the campsite only to be greeted by a security guard who told me that there was no vehicle access to the campsite and I would have to ferry all my gear on foot.

Seeing as I had a young child with me he said I could dump my gear at the entrance and then park up. Bear in mind I had a large generator, tent, gazebo and all the other camping necessities I didn't really fancy leaving it in the dark unattended. However, after a quick chat with the security guard he suggested I go and try and set up in the campervan site which I did and was able to keep my valuables in my vehicle.

I don't understand the organisers doing this and I feel it's completely unreasonable to expect anybody – especially those with families – to move their gear in this way. Suppose that's what happens when no motocross people/fans organise our sport. On a happier note the racing was fantastic and ours boys did us proud, even if the viewing was crap!

So when are all the Japanese going to follow the Austrians and fit electric starts? Then we'd have been on the podium instead of Billy trying to fire up a hot 450 at the end of 30 minutes hard racing.

**Trevor, Hants**

*Sounds like shades of Glastonbury where the well-prepared campers turn up with wheelbarrows to cart their stuff to the campsite. Still you got sorted in the end. And, yes, it would have been so different if Billy Mac had an electric boot on his bike...*

## NEW RECRUIT!

My son, who is 10, is really keen to get involved in MX. My husband and I unfortunately don't know a lot but we are keen to get him involved. We aren't too sure about two-stroke and four-stroke bikes. Could you let me know the difference and what would be the best to get a 10-year-old started on.

Are there any clubs we can join? We live near Bewdly in Worcestershire. I would appreciate any help and advice...

**Alice, via email**

*Hi Alice, first off a warm welcome to scrambling biking – your son's a very lucky lad to have parents like you! At 10 he'll be looking at the Small Wheel 85cc class and as he's a beginner your best bet is to look for a two-stroke of that capacity as the four-stroke 150 which is also eligible will be a bit of a handful. As far as clubs go try the ACU website or the BSMA Cotswold club – their website is [www.cotswoldymc.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldymc.co.uk)*

## SNOW BIZ

Don't know if the same applies to you but we've been lucky enough to get a bit of snow over the past few days. I thought I'd send you some pictures of my mates enjoying it the way it should be enjoyed...

**Gwilym Davies, Mid Wales**

*Lucky sods...*



## GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

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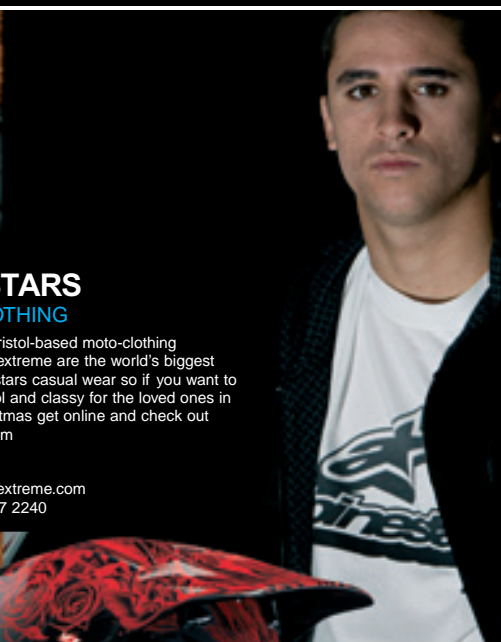
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'I'm turning Latinese, I think I'm turning Latinese, I really think so,' aren't actually lyrics from that song by The Vapors even though they sound just the same. That's probably because when the new-wave power-pop band from Guildford performed their almost chart-topping song in 1980 nobody at Fox Racing had thought to invent the hybrid Latin American/Japanese inspired designs shown on this top quality race kit here and so there was nowt to sing about was there. Got it? Cool.

**Price:** V3 helmet £220, Pant £135, Jersey £40, Gloves £30  
**Supplier:** [foxhead.com](http://foxhead.com)  
**Contact:** 0191 487 6100





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I'm not saying my mother always looks on the dark side of things but if she doesn't how come she frequently tells me to 'always wear clean underwear because you might get hit by a bus'. That always seems quite stupid to me because I reckon that if I'm unlucky enough to come into contact with a speeding charabanc I'll soil my clean pants quite heavily and therefore will have wasted my time squeezing my adequate ass into some clean, sexy little numbers like these Pull-In pants from France.

**Price:** From 32 Euros  
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## FOX RACING V2 HELMET HART AND HUNTINGDON EDITION

Inked-up bad-boy of FMX Carey Hart has had a lot on his mind recently as after his sickening split with pop princess Pink the philandering punk perpetually ponders what life without Alecia Moore – that's her real name don't ya know – might be like. However, the heroic and hung hunk has still found time to work on some other extra projects – a speciality of his it seems – one of which is the perfect pimping of a V2 helmet for Fox Racing, the result being this ACU Gold stamped Hart and Huntingdon edition brain bucket. Sweet!

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## TEENAGE KICKS!

*It's been a real up and down season for 15-year-old Scott Elderfield with the young racer from Guildford in Surrey scoring the highest finish of any two-stroke rider in the Maxxis British championships – fifth in MX1 at Canada Heights – as a KTM privateer before landing a team ride with Swift Suzuki. Although that whole deal didn't pan out too well and Scott was forced to switch to the PAR Honda team before the end of the season, Eldy was happy to be back on the gas and back in his trademark orange helmet.*

Photo by Suffy

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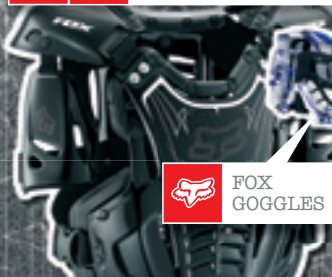
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profile

*It's been a tough '08 for Shaun Simpson but a factory ride in '09 makes it all worthwhile*





# SCOTTISH POWER!

AFTER A BREAKTHROUGH YEAR IN 2008 THAT'S SEEN HIM WIN THE BRITISH MX2 TITLE, REPRESENT TEAM GB AT THE MX DES NATIONS AND LEAP-FROG AN ASTONISHING 20 PLACES IN THE WORLD STANDINGS, HOT-SHOT SCOT SHAUN SIMPSON'S SHOOTING FOR THE VERY TOP IN '09...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**

If you go down to the woods today...you're going to get T-boned



“One more time!” “One more time!” “One more time!” Photoshoots can be a long, drawn-out affair – especially when Sutt’s after that one ‘keeper’ of a cover-shot – but even though there’s an icy wind whistling round our hairy boys and the light’s fading, Shaun Simpson keeps on slamming his KTM UK machine into the same turn over and over. After half-a-dozen goes he pulls up, checks out the shots on the back of Dawg’s camera, snicks the SX-F into first and the whole process starts up again.

Luckily, Shaun’s enthusiasm is infectious – he’s loving it so I’m loving it, Sutt’s loving it, DBR designer-cum-cinematographer Marge is loving it and Fat Cat Motopark owner Martin Craven, who’s provided the venue for our photoshoot, is loving it too. Lovely!

After a long, tough season Shaun doesn’t appear to be even the slightest bit jaded. Sure, it’s easy to be full of beans when you’ve just leapt 20 places in the world rankings, won the British MX2 title, represented your country in the MXdN and secured a full-factory deal for 2009. But I suspect enthusiasm is an innate quality in the 20-year-old Scot.

“In previous years I’d set my goal as top 15 in the world so obviously I’d been far from that but this year, after the first few races, I said top 12 and that I was really going to go for it,” he grins. “In the British I said I was trying to go and win it. In previous years I’d said top three but knowing what I could do on the KTM I set my sights even higher and, yeah, I’ve blown my expectations away by quite a lot at the GPs. Next year it’s got to be two titles hopefully...”

“Next year I’ve got a realistic chance of being a world champion – definitely. The three main competitors are going away and I’ve got to be one of the main contenders with finishing fourth in the championship this year. The only guy that beat me that’s racing next year is Nicolas Aubin and, yeah, he rode strong this year but at times I had the beating of him so next year the bike’s going to be better and the support’s going to be better so there’s no reason why I can’t get on that top step.”

The day before our photoshoot Shaun drove across from Holland where he’d been testing his ‘09 bike, parked his battered Sprinter up in an industrial estate on the outskirts of Doncaster and slept on a pile of coats because there was too much clutter to pull the bed out. But having spent his whole life on the road – first accompanying his dad Willie who contested GPs in the ‘80s and ‘90s, then later as an aspiring racer himself – he’s used to putting in the miles.

It’s an ‘old-school’ upbringing and attitude that’s stood him in good stead as, certainly no stand-out schoolboy star, Shaun’s had to work harder than most to pull himself up into the position of factory rider and title candidate.

“I was never a winner in the schoolboys – I was always third or fourth – but I think that was good for me as well because if you go through the schoolboys being a winner when you come into the adults and you’re not winning then you get a big shock. I think that’s what happens to a lot of the guys.

“There are exceptions like Tommy [Searle] who was a winner in the schoolboys and came in and started winning in the adults but some of the

guys who were real good in the schoolboys, they get a big shock and that’s it, they just blow out. So I think that was good for me – I had to work for where I was and when I came into the adults it wasn’t any different for me so I just thought ‘just keep at it, just keep making progress’. So I was more motivated when I got to my early adult career.”

Shaun’s raced three different makes of bike in the last four years but while the machinery has changed, one thing has remained consistent – the support of team boss Roger Magee. Shaun was a fledgling member of Tim Chamber’s KTM outfit in ‘04 but when the plug was pulled on the team at the start of ‘05 Shaun was left without a ride. Then Roger stepped in and Team Lizard Honda was born. The following year it morphed into Wulfsport Honda, then Wulfsport Kawasaki in ‘07 before Roger hooked up with KTM to run the official UK team for ‘08.

Throughout his time with Roger the regular changes of machinery – plus a succession of injuries – have restricted Shaun’s results but everything suddenly clicked into place this year. So what was the secret ingredient?

“Obviously, last year I was on a Kawasaki so for 2008 it was a change again – this time to KTM. And we knew about it earlier this time – I had my first bike in time for the Sheffield supercross – so come January I could really concentrate on getting the bike set up as I was already a little bit used to it. I really gelled with the bike this year. In ‘04 I rode a 125 KTM so I was excited to ride one again and really looking forward to it.

“The beginning of the year we went to >>

# SHAUN ON...

## FACTORY MACHINERY >>

"I was really impressed with the engine on the factory bike. The engine I've had this year has been absolutely amazing – much better than I've had before – so I think that's had a lot to do with what my results have been this year."

"But it's just the whole package on the factory bike. The suspension's that little bit better, the engine's that little bit better, the brakes are that little bit better. It makes for those little extra bits you need on the track. At the end of the day I've showed this year that my pace isn't that bad – it's those little bits I need to put in place and I think the factory team can help me do that. The last pieces of the jigsaw."

Our photoshoot with Shaun took place the day after he returned from a factory test in Holland



# POWER!





## SHAUN ON..

STEFAN EVERTS >>

"I've not really worked with him before or talked with him so it's all a new experience but the meetings I've had with him this year already I've gelled with him. He's just a normal guy at the end of the day – you've just got to be yourself, he's himself and you just get on with things. Obviously, he's been there, done it himself and he knows what it takes and he's now just trying to pass his knowledge on to the other guys. You've really got to listen to him – what he's saying is not bulls\*\*t – so you've got to take it onboard. What he says makes sense."

## SHAUN ON...

### TIME OFF FROM MX >>

"To be honest over the last few years I've lived in the truck and lived at the workshop so I'm always motocross. Sometimes I think that's maybe some of my problem – I need to get away from it a little bit but I can do that more when I go home because I've got my own space, my friends are there and that's what I'm looking forward to next year.

"I've got my own apartment in Belgium and I'll be able to sit down, relax, chill out, go to the cinema, whatever. In the last few years it's been hard but we've had to do it. That's the way the team's been set up. When I go home in the winter obviously I go out with my friends, go out partying and have a good time really – you've got to."

### INJURIES >>

"I think I've had one season without injury and that was in '04 when I rode KTM. Injuries have kinda been my whole career – every season I've had one if not two injuries. I thought this year was going to be the year and then in Czecho I went and broke my collarbone so it was pretty hard to take although it didn't set me back for so long.

"Most of the injuries I've had haven't set me back for so long – last year I broke my wrist but it only set me back for three or four weeks – but it's them little setbacks that set back your training. Hopefully next year I'll have an injury-free season...

"I've dislocated my left shoulder twice – the first time I also punctured my lung and broke some ribs – and I broke my fibula in '05 at Lierop, broke my foot really bad when I was younger when the bike seized over a jump, broke three or four collarbones, wrist, broke my thumb on a BMX when I was younger. That's about it really – I've had quite a few!"

# A BIG THANKS!

FAT CAT >>

Our photoshoot with Shaun wouldn't have been possible without the help of our mate Martin Craven and his immaculate Fat Cat Motopark at Armthorpe – just off J4 of the M18. Five brilliantly prepped tracks, an extreme enduro course, parts shop, camping, on-site catering, cabaret bar\* and guaranteed sunshine\*\* make it the hound's hairy boys! For more details give Martin a bell on 07990 514509 or check out the website at [www.fatcatmoto-parc.co.uk](http://www.fatcatmoto-parc.co.uk)

\* Made up

\*\* Also made up



Shaun styles it up at Fat Cat

"Don't look – the plastering isn't finished yet!"

the Everts training camp, done a bit of testing down there and lots of riding to build up my endurance strength and everything went good. Then we came to the first international at Mantova and I went really good there – can't remember my results but I was the same pace as Tommy, Tyla and some of those guys so I was real happy after that. Then we did a Belgian international and I won that and then we came to Hawkstone and I showed there my speed was really good. I was excited – I was really enjoying riding the bike again.

"After that we had the first British championship and I didn't have so good luck there – the fuel pipe broke in the first race and it was a bit of a nightmare so to know now that I've won the British championship after from the very first round playing catch-up... Then I broke my collarbone and had to come back strong at Brampton. It was a hard old year."

Shaun had indeed being playing catch-up with three-time British champ Stephen Sword stretching out a 22-point lead going into round five of the series at Desertmartin. But a bad shoulder injury meant Swordy was riding hurt and Shaun did exactly what he needed to do – win both motos – to come away with the series lead.

Swordy closed again with victory at Foxhill but Simpson landed the killer blow at Brampton. Racing with a freshly-plated collarbone after his crash at the Czech GP, Shaun could only qualify in 12th position – some three-and-a-half seconds off the pace. But Swordy had a day to forget while Shaun dug deep and left with a double win and a 15-point lead – an advantage Swordy could only chip away at but not overturn at Hawkstone Park's final round.

While his domestic season has been super-successful, it's Shaun's performance on the world stage – under the eyes of the KTM bigwigs – that has earned him his factory ride. Lightning out of the gate, his starts were the key to some solid early-season scores including a fantastic first podium in Bulgaria where a race two second helped him to third overall. But for Shaun the big mental turning point came in a rain-lashed Swedish GP where he holeshot both motos.

"The bit that stands out for me the most this year was when I was battling with Tyla, Tommy and Cairoli in Sweden. That was the weekend when I felt like I was one of them. Every week them three guys would be gone and fourth place would be back maybe 20 seconds and you think 's\*\*t, them guys are gone' and that was the weekend when I felt like I was one of them.

"I had the pace, I didn't think I was riding out of my skin, I was leading both the races, that weekend I really felt like I was on it. To be racing with those guys, in a GP at the front of the pack – it's just amazing. To be third on the podium twice this year when I never thought I could get a podium and in Sweden to be so close to first was like the highlight of the year for me."

When Cairoli picked up his season-stuffing knee injury in South Africa it looked for a time as though Shaun was on course for a FIM bronze medal. But the broken collarbone sustained on the last lap of his qualifier in Czecho resulted in a no-score and gave Aubin sufficient momentum to pull out a 12-point gap by the end of the series. Still, from 24th to fourth in a season is a terrific accomplishment and one Shaun, armed with a factory bike, intends to build on in 2009.

"It's been one of those years – it's all been going well but at the same time I've had hurdles I've had to get across. I've done it well and I'm glad everything's worked out this year and I've managed to get a factory ride for next year so I couldn't be happier."

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# SHAUN ON...

## FAMILY TIES >>

"My dad started off in the mid '70s and then he was Scottish champion in I think '76 and that's when he sort of started his career quite well. Then in the '80s – '79, '80 – he done his first GPs and then he done GPs for 10 years so he was a hardcore traveller. It's not like he made mega money out of it – he just done it for the love of the sport.

"Throughout dad's career I think he struggled for help – he just done it off his own back so it was harder for him. Maybe things have just happened a little bit easier for me – I got in a team and then I went to Roger's team and I've been in there now for four years and we've been gradually getting better help. My dad's been there as well so he's been able to give me tips and stuff like that.

"His mum and dad wasn't really that interested – they would support him but they wouldn't really get into it. Dad's been there since I was a boy, worked on the bike, helped me with lines. But he's never pushed me into doing anything – he's never said 'you've got to do that, you've got to go training, you've got to go running', he just said 'if you want to go running or a bit of training it will help you'. He's never b\*\*\*\*\*ked me – that's just the way he is, he's real quiet. Even after I won the British championship he was just like, 'well done son', that was it – he's a real good guy.

"I think as soon as I was born then two, three weeks and I was on the road. It's just been my life – I've lived in the race truck when dad was doing GPs from the late '80s. Every weekend I'd go, bring my BMX and just do motos round the truck or build a jump or something. I got my first bike when I was four years old – a PW50 – and just rode about the fields and went practising with my dad. I got bigger and bigger bikes and when I was 13 my dad said I could race. I was building up until then..."



For exclusive video footage of our photoshoot with Shaun go to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com)

# WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

## SIGNED SIMPSON KIT UP FOR GRABS >>

While Shaun was signing autographs we ripped into the back of his Sprinter and half-inched a set of Kini riding kit (that's jeans and jersey) and then forged his signature on the shirt for an exclusive competition.

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# CLOCKWORK ORANGE

CONSISTENT, FAST – CONSISTENTLY FAST. THE FACTORY KTMS  
ARE SOME PIECES OF KIT AS SUTTY FINDS OUT IN FAENZA

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Ray Archer**

*Tommy Searle's #2 machine – he  
likes his bikes with a 'used' feel*



**F**ully fledged factory KTM 250SX-Fs were without doubt the bike to have in the MX2 division this year as the three riders who had them – Tyla Rattray, Tommy Searle and Rui Goncalves – were all able to consistently get out of the gate at the front of the pack, something that's always important in motocross but even more so in the ultra-competitive MX2 division where horsepower is king.

The factory KTMs were so dominant in 2008 that not even the '07 world champ Antonio Cairoli and his De Carli-tuned Yamaha – the bike that stood out as being an absolute rocket in last year's championship – could match the factory firepower supplied by the perfectly prepped Austrian orange machines. Of course power isn't everything and Tyla and Tommy still had to ride the wheels off their weapons to finish a clear first and second in the final MX2 world championship standings but a good bike always helps, right?

To find out just how good their works weapons are or aren't I saddled up and put the bikes through their paces – or vice versa – in Italy just a couple of days after Tyla had squeezed out Tommy for the MX2 world title. After two days of GP action and Monday's Honda CRF450 test the surface of the Faenza circuit was absolutely finished – full of holes, bumps and ruts – and about as much fun to ride as your local one way system but an excellent test for the bikes.

To be able to get the full feel for the factory 250F power and handling prowess I started out on an SXS-kitted 250SX-F. The SXS isn't a complete bike like it was before but rather a stock bike with carbon, engine, chassis and suspension SXS parts from KTM's Offroad Powerparts catalogue thrown at it.

The 124-page Powerparts pamphlet is a must-have item for all KTM owners because as well as all the SXS goodies inside there are a plethora of brilliant bits to customise your bike plus numerous technical solutions (to problems you'll probably never encounter). The SXS-kitted bike was fun to ride and a good warm-up for what lay ahead although I felt the suspension was a little harsh – probably due to the whole bike being brand new.

With Tyla's world championship winning bike

being in high demand I started my factory bike test with a run out on Tommy Searle's #2 machine instead. Tommy's bike is tuned and prepped on a day-to-day basis by top-tech Gareth Edmunds who you may remember from Charley Boorman's Race to Dakar telly series.

He explained that Tommy likes his bikes to feel used, even to the point where Gareth sands down Tommy's new grips (half-waffle Kevlar Renthals) to make them feel worn in. With Tommy preferring a used and loose feel to his bike it's no surprise that he chooses to run Renthal Fatbars that offer more flex than the Twinwalls team-mates Tyla and Rui run. His lever position is on the low side of neutral but not freakishly and his cut-down seat with obligatory step – if you ain't got a stepped seat you're a nobody in GP motocross apparently – is nicely smoothed and rounded too which helps with the 'used' feel.

As soon as you hit the track you realise the motor is packing a lot of ponies and has a wide spread of power. So wide in fact that even an overweight veteran like myself can come out of a corner either one gear too low or one gear too high and still get to the next turn faster than I would have on the SXS-kitted stocker even if I'd got it perfect (which doesn't happen too often these days).

It seems that factory four-strokes are all tuned to offer large amounts of controllable power and this bike is no different. The fantastic spread of good power the motor offers makes this bike easy to ride and for Tommy it makes it easy to ride fast. By no means is the factory KTM motor punting out stock 450 amounts of ponies but I'm sure it's not a million miles away on the dyno and the linear delivery makes the power it does produce very useable on the track too.

While the motor was easy to figure out on Tommy's bike the suspension confused the fudge out of me. Balance-wise Tommy likes his front end high and the rear low which means the bike rides like a speedboat and the rear sits super-low when under power. In theory this sort of set-up should mean that the bike handles like crap and pushes the front end through corners but the factory KTM turns well in ruts, berms and on the flat too even though things felt slightly on the cramped side for me as >>



Tyla and Tommy's 250Fs are factory fliers but DBR's Deputy Dawg prefers Nagl's fo-fiddy...



## MAX'S MACHINE!

THE BEST BIKE ON THE DAY FOR ME BY FAR – MAX NAGL'S FACTORY FO-FIDDY >>

Max Nagl ended the 2008 GP season on a high, taking the first double moto win of his career at the Faenza circuit. Nagl's been sensational all year on all types of track and especially out of the start which always made me think that his bike had to be a little bit special in the motor department.

Out of all the bikes available to ride on the day, Max's is closest to being set up how I'd have it. Relatively high – a tad higher than horizontal – levers with the front brake biting immediately with zero play in the lever, half-waffle Kevlar grips, a minutely skimmed seat with a small step, high rear brake pedal and a level shift lever. Like I say, for me the ergonomics are dynamite.

Electric starting is the b\*\*\*\*\*ks and firing this 450 into life is painless. The motor sounds sweet on tickover but even better on full throttle when you can really hear the bark from the silencer. But far from being a revver's dream this machine responds best to being short-shifted so the slap from the chain is almost as loud as the perfectly carburetted motor. The motor will pull strongly and cleanly from nothing in third gear or above and although it works best when pulling high gears the engine still creates big power at high revs – not that you'd want to push it too hard.

In some ways riding this bike makes me think that Max Nagl is one lazy mofo as everything on this bike works with minimal

effort. The brakes work just as soon as you touch them, the motor pulls from way down low in the rev range and shifting at low RPMs is effortless too. Sweet!

Max's start device is fitted so the front is way low when it's clicked in – too low for me but my legs are a good few inches longer than Nagl's. I only had time to try two practice starts before the KTM techs pulled me off this bike and I fluffed them both basically because I was taken aback by how much power this bike had – even with the start device on this bike just wanted to stand up on its back wheel as soon as I let the clutch bite. In fact on one attempt I got a good 50 metres or so out of the gate before I fully disengaged the clutch such was my battle to keep it under control! More practice needed on my starts me thinks...

The suspension on Max's bike is the best balanced of the bunch by far too. As it's a little on the soft side for my hefty bones the bike sat a little lower in the stroke than I'd have liked but it never came close to bottoming out such was the progressiveness of the WP units' damping.

Overall Max's machine is pretty sweet handling and the only disappointing thing about riding it was knowing that I wasn't anywhere near to being on top of my game and so couldn't come close to reaping the full rewards of riding such an excellent piece of motocross machinery.



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*Rattray's bike has the sort of ponies you'd expect from a world championship winning machine*

I'm a good few inches longer – and girthier – than Tommy.

Aside from the cramped – for me – cockpit and strange bike balance, Tommy's forks feel overly harsh in the mid-stroke too making the set-up of this machine a hard one to figure out – why Tommy, why? I asked Gareth about it and he told me "that's how Tommy likes it" so we'll leave it at that.

Shifting is flawless on the factory KTMs and the clutch operation is too. Likewise the factory Brembo brakes are so progressive and strong you could never want anything more on a motocross track...

Rattray's bike is exactly the same as Tommy's in most departments – motor, exhaust, suspension units, gearing, wheels and tyres etc – meaning performance is very similar even though the set-up is quite different. In the cockpit Rattray runs his levers a little higher than Tommy and he opts to run a full height seat with an added hump which makes me think Tyla prefers to sit on the bike rather than in it as Tommy appears to. Soft compound grips on Twinwall bars finish off the ergonomics nicely.

You'd have to be some kind of dirt biking wizard – or perhaps a fricking liar – to come

back from riding these two bikes with varying opinions of how the motors perform but the suspension is quite different even though the high front/low back thing seems to be a recurring theme with all the factory KTMs.

Despite Tyla being 12kg heavier than his team-mate, his forks are considerably softer than Tommy's and the action doesn't feel at all harsh in any way. This helps the bike feel more balanced and I feel that it helped Tyla's bike to feel more controllable through turns and accelerating out of them – especially when there were square-edged acceleration bumps I was hitting at an angle in an attempt to find a smoother, faster line.

The suspension is excellent on both these bikes and it's more or less impossible to blame the factory WP units at either end when I did get out of shape. The strength of the motor helps avert disaster too as there's always something more to pull you out of trouble should you need it.

Overall, I'd say the factory KTM 250SX-F is an awesome bike – but then again show me a factory machine from any of the big five that isn't – and it doesn't surprise me at all that Rattray was able to take his first world title on one.



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TO A HISTORIC VICTORY  
AT GAILDORF IN 1982

# SWANSONG!

AFTER 23 YEARS THE TROPHÉE DES NATIONS REACHED THE END OF THE LINE WITH AMERICAN DOMINATION AND BRITISH DETERIORATION IN SWEDEN IN 1984...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**T**he 250cc Trophee des Nations was promoted centre stage in 1981 when it took place a week before its big brother, the MX des. This coincided with the arrival of a well-drilled, immaculately-clad US squad from Honda America.

They showed up at Lommel in Belgium after a three-year American absence and, under the astute management of Belgian ex-pat Roger De Coster, destroyed the doubting Europeans. It would prove a seminal day in MX history.

And 12 months later they were back with a change in personnel with Danny 'Magoo' Chandler and Jim Gibson joining 1981 survivors Johnny O'Mara and Donnie Hansen. But Hansen, after dominating the final 250 GP of the season in Sweden, suffered a massive, career-ending practice crash three days later. His emergency replacement was a stylish, slender 20-year-old from Virginia called David Bailey and they duly won an emotional MX des in Switzerland before crossing the border back into Germany where Hansen lay in a coma.

There, on a beautiful, sunny September day in the rolling countryside around Gaildorf, the ebullient 'Magoo' Chandler – a carrot-headed Californian livewire – became the only rider ever

to win all four races of the MX and Trophee des!

British team leader Graham Noyce struggled on an outpaced '81 Honda round the fast, sweeping circuit. Just 27th off the start – "I was okay for the first 10 feet!" – 'Rolls' Noyce hit a fallen Suzuki five laps later and was pitched over the bars. His teenaged team-mates Dave Thorpe (Kawasaki) and Jem Whatley (Suzuki) overwhelmed O'Mara to take second and third places behind a gleefully rampant Chandler but Neil Hudson melted in the midday sun and the USA, packing out the top 10, nosed ahead of the Brits by two points with Belgium third.

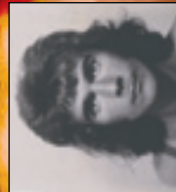
O'Mara, Magoo and Gibson gated at the front of race two with Bailey 15th after effectively felling Belgian Georges Jobe in turn two and with a high-speed collision somersaulting little Harry Everts horribly down the track Belgium were virtually out of contention. Britain looked strong with Thorpe waging war against Chandler, O'Mara and Andre Vromans up front ahead of Whatley and Hudson. But Thorpe smacked his left foot against a trackside tyre and pulled out in pain, unable to change gear. Noyce exited with a broken gear linkage as Whatley fought Bailey and Gibson – although all three were swamped late on by German powerhouse Rolf Dieffenbach

and the astonishing Jobe.

Frantic calculations showed British team manager Dave Nicoll that one more lap from Thorpe would pip Germany for third place by a point. He despatched David on a slow lap as Magoo crossed the finishing line for a famous victory and dramatically collapsed, having been stung by a bee! Already stripped off in the sapping heat, Thorpe pulled on everything except his gloves. The race's 'technical controller' duly disqualified him for being 'incorrectly dressed' and, having only five classified finishers, Britain plummeted to seventh place behind Belgian 'B' team Luxembourg.

With O'Mara third, Bailey sixth and Gibson eighth the US won handsomely from Belgium and Germany. "We did it for Donnie," said Honda's Dave Arnold at a packed presentation that evening. And as the Germans stepped proudly up to a rapturous welcome, British team helper Dave Smith burst into tears. "That trophy should have been ours," sobbed the inconsolable little Midlander!

Come 1983 the States had once more clinched victory in the MX des ahead of Belgium and Great Britain before driving down to Czechoslovakia and the stunning, vertiginous



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he



THE LAST WINNERS!  
ROGER DE COSTER WITH  
(L TO R) D'MORA, WARD,  
GLOVER + JOHNSON,  
SWEDEN, 1984

circuit of Povaska Bystrica. "This has to be the finest track I have ever ridden in my life," said an admiring Bailey, the only Honda rider retained in the American quartet. He opted for a second row start from the narrow starting gate off which a short straight swept left up a steep climb. Carnage ensued! Belgians Vromans and Andre Malherbe along with Bailey and Jeff

Ward (Kawasaki) were left floundering and 30,000 Czech fans witnessed an epic. Jobe led until the penultimate lap, missed a gear and was snapped up by Jem Whatley spun off trying to pass Glover's team-mate Mark Barnett (Suzuki) and lost out to a mercurial Malherbe. But Eric Geboers had punctured, Thorpe was

beaten by Bailey and Ward and the USA once more held sway, six points ahead of Belgium. The Yanks all gated top six in race two. Malherbe howled through the pack until pitting to change a flat tyre and Jobe looped out his Suzuki, leaving 125 world champ Geboers to uphold Flemish pride as he forced exultantly to victory >>

DESCRIPTION SIGNATURE			
1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place
5th Place	6th Place	7th Place	8th Place
9th Place	10th Place	11th Place	12th Place
13th Place	14th Place	15th Place	16th Place
17th Place	18th Place	19th Place	20th Place
21st Place	22nd Place	23rd Place	24th Place
25th Place	26th Place	27th Place	28th Place
29th Place	30th Place	31st Place	32nd Place
33rd Place	34th Place	35th Place	36th Place
37th Place	38th Place	39th Place	40th Place
41st Place	42nd Place	43rd Place	44th Place
45th Place	46th Place	47th Place	48th Place
49th Place	50th Place	51st Place	52nd Place
53rd Place	54th Place	55th Place	56th Place
57th Place	58th Place	59th Place	60th Place
61st Place	62nd Place	63rd Place	64th Place
65th Place	66th Place	67th Place	68th Place
69th Place	70th Place	71st Place	72nd Place
73rd Place	74th Place	75th Place	76th Place
77th Place	78th Place	79th Place	80th Place
81st Place	82nd Place	83rd Place	84th Place
85th Place	86th Place	87th Place	88th Place
89th Place	90th Place	91st Place	92nd Place
93rd Place	94th Place	95th Place	96th Place
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with Ward, Glover, Barnett and Bailey strung out behind him to register a resounding Trophee des Nations hat-trick. Belgium placed second with Germany once more third. "Stupid Americans," smiled Malherbe. "Next year I want to beat them!"

It didn't happen. Crowned 500 world champion for a third time in 1984, Andre led a spirited MX des assault in Finland and came within a whisker of success. But America won again, though Bailey suffered a wrist injury. That left Ward, O'Mara and Rick Johnson (Yamaha) seeking a new team-mate for what the FIM had already decreed would be the last ever Trophee des. They didn't need to look far. Glover, over to win the Gothenburg supercross on Friday night, joined the US squad on Saturday at Varberg – a berserk, bumpy blast through the forests just outside town!

The British quartet – fourth in Finland only a point behind Sweden – fielded Thorpe, Whatley, Kurt Nicoll (KTM) and Shaun Simpson's dad Willie (Suzuki). Their race shirts featured a

pastel Union Jack with a white 'GB' emblazoned through the middle. Glover was tickled. "GB? That stands for Goon Boys, doesn't it!" grinned the 'Golden Boy'. On Saturday night Goon Boy Thorpe found himself an unexpected recipient of Bailey's works Honda – it was undeniably fast but undersized and undersprung for the big Berkshire man!

No country had ever placed 1-2-3-4 in a des Nations moto. The last ever Trophee was the perfect place to ice the cake. Jeff Ward's fearsome factory Kawasaki won ahead of Glover, O'Mara and Johnson, although not before Jem Whatley had run third for 30 minutes until puncturing on the stony track. Glover rode a borrowed production Yamaha. "Carla asked me how I could ride such a heap of s\*\*t so fast!" he laughed. "It shows his class," muttered Thorpe who chased home the Yanks.

Despite Willie Simpson suffering the biggest crash of his career, the strife-torn Brits still held a distant second ahead of Italy, Belgium and the Swedes. Nicoll was chuffed. "Well, the

Americans have six points and we have 37. They're probably panicking a bit now!"

But the Goon Boys had more misadventures in store. Both Whatley and Simpson wiped out in a seven-rider pile-up at the start of race two. Then Nicoll knocked himself silly across the finishing line tabletop in front of Thorpe, who was enmeshed in a battle with Jobe and Hakan Carlqvist. "After Kurt had gone I lapped Willie," said Thorpe. "Then soon after I passed Jem and thought 'what am I doing out here!'"

Ward and Glover once more ran one-two as Sweden, inspired by Carla and Jorgen Nilsson, blasted through to second to the joy of an enthusiastic crowd. Italy, led by world 125 champ Michele Rinaldi (Suzuki), were a surprise third. But GB, despite Thorpe's fine fifth in Carla's wheeltracks, slumped to eighth place. Or second last. About right for a bunch of Goon Boys!

And that was that. The FIM instigated a big, shiny all-in-one MX des for 1985 and the eventful, entertaining 23-year history of the Trophee des Nations was done.

DAVID BAILEY ENJOYING  
"THE FINEST TRACK I'VE  
EVER RIDDEN",  
OZEGNO, 1983



BOBBY GABEL SHOWS  
THAT AMERICAN FINALISTS  
TO BEAT THEM "STUPID  
AMERICANS" IN 1984!



FIRST RACE WINNER BOBBY  
GABEL DUELS WITH BEST  
BRIT JEM WHATLEY IN  
CIECHO, 1985



# MONSTERBUNCH!

THE RINALDI YAMAHA TEAM HAVE DONE A LOT OF WINNING OVER THE YEARS AND AFTER A BLIP IN '07 IT WAS BUSINESS AS USUAL IN '08 FOR THE MONSTER MEN

Words by Jonty Edmunds Photos by Yamaha

If there's one team on the MXGP scene that's endured more than its fair share of ups and downs in recent seasons it's the Monster Yamaha Motocross Team – formerly Rinaldi Yamaha. With a string of championship successes to their name what the Italian squad has achieved during the last 10 years is little short of astonishing. But during recent seasons dominance has been mixed with disappointment. In fact both 2006 and '07 ended far from the way the Italian squad hoped they would.

Firstly there was the small matter of Stefan Everts – their long-serving championship-winning machine switching camps to KTM. Okay, he'd won them the MX1 title in '06 but the way in which he left didn't exactly please anyone connected to Yamaha, least of all Michele Rinaldi.

Then there's the Josh Coppins story. Dominating last year's MX1 world championship, the Kiwi ace looked assured of his first world title. As everyone knows that never happened. With the championship headed towards its close Josh crashed in Loket and the rest, as they say, is history. To say that the memories of Josh's wayward championship still haunt the Rinaldi team – and in particular owner Michele Rinaldi – is no exaggeration. While it is true that the MX1 title went begging it is also true that Michele, one year on, still finds it hard to accept to this day.

This year things went right for the team. Injury again affected Josh's title aspirations but their new signing David Philippaerts put the team back on top and secured his first ever world title. It's been a tough few years for the team but finally things have come good...



special feature

*An Italian rider, on an Italian team, winning a world title in Italy – 2008 was a dream come true for David Philippaerts*

# DAVID PHILIPPAERTS

## MX1 WORLD CHAMPION >>

**DBR:** What does it mean to you to compete for the Monster Yamaha Motocross Team?

**DP:** "It was very good for me in many ways. The first thing is that it is much easier for me racing for an Italian team. I am able to spend more time at home and I can communicate with the team well rather than speaking in English. That is really important."

"At KTM it was sometimes difficult communicating exactly. I would try and explain as best I could but it was sometimes hard. With the Rinaldi team it is very easy. This is a very important thing for me."

**DBR:** Although you were the new rider alongside Josh did you feel under pressure to perform as the Italian rider in an Italian team?

**DP:** "No, I never felt under pressure this season. The team wanted me to finish top five and didn't expect me to win the title. At the start of the season Josh was the leader of the team because he was so fast in '07 and was close to winning the title. I was expected to perform but never under pressure to perform."

**DBR:** Having won the MX1 title it's easy to say that '08 was a good year for David Philippaerts but are you happy with your season?

**DP:** "I am not 100 per cent happy because I would have liked to have won some more races. It's not the best thing to do for the fans but at some races I closed the gas a little because I was thinking about the championship. For the team and to make sure I won the title there were a few occasions where I didn't push for the win because I wanted to take good points."

"Next year, if I feel strong, I would like to try and win some more races. I think that I can do that. At the start of this year I had to learn the new bike and learn to work with the new team. Next year I will be on a similar bike and with some good training I'm confident I can be stronger."

**DBR:** What does it mean to you to have won your first world title?

**DP:** "It is amazing. The way the championship ended was almost too perfect – I am an Italian rider, I race for an Italian team and I won the title at a track close to the team's workshop. It's been a great year and everything has worked perfectly. I had some bad races like in France and at Lommel but still things worked out well and I won the title."

"I learned this season that I don't need to win every race to win the title. Next season I want to make sure I win when it is possible to win – when my body is perfect and I like the track then I will push to win. When I don't feel 100 per cent or I don't like the track so much I will ride for points, not victory."

**DBR:** Thinking about the championship and not just racing to win GPs is a very mature attitude to have. Is this something that has come from Michele and the Rinaldi team or something you figured out?

**DP:** "For sure Michele and the team have made me realise that winning a championship isn't always about winning every race. But I also realised this last year. Steve Ramon has won two titles like this. I followed Steve many times this year and I think he is one of the best riders in the world. He uses great lines, special lines sometimes and doesn't take risks when he doesn't need to."

**DBR:** A lot of people don't understand why KTM didn't try harder to re-sign you for '08. Did your relationship with Stefan Everts have anything to do with your desire to race for Yamaha?

**DP:** "I signed for Yamaha because I wanted to race for the Monster Yamaha Motocross Team. We only had to speak a little bit about money but everything was organised very quickly because I wanted to race for the team and they wanted me to race for them."

"I didn't leave KTM because of Stefan Everts. I like Stefan – he is a great rider. The problem with Stefan last year was that there were four riders on two different bikes which is very, very difficult for any manager. If you speak to any other team manager they will tell you that."

"The second thing is that last year was Stefan's first year doing something other than racing a motorcycle. Like anyone who changes their job you need time to learn. The first year is about learning and new experiences, the second year is always better. I think that's how it was last year. This year Tyla has won the

MX2 title, Tommy Searle won races and Max Nagl and Jonathan Barragan were very fast. I didn't leave KTM because of Stefan. I wanted to race for Yamaha."

**DBR:** With KTM you were a direct factory rider whereas the Rinaldi Yamaha set-up is notably smaller. What's it like being a part of a smaller team?

**DP:** "It works very, very well. I had some problems with my clutch at the GP in Ireland and the next GP was Lierop in the sand. Everyone knows sand races are hard on the clutch. There was only one week to work out what the problem was and to find a solution. The team worked very, very hard and in Lierop it was perfect."

"For me one of the great things about the Rinaldi team is that because it is smaller things happen very fast. I speak to Mino [Raspanti – Racing Manager] and things get done. The structure is simple, also. I have a mechanic for my race bike and a mechanic for my practice bike. Not one person doing both."

**DBR:** It often takes time for a rider to win when changing from one team to another and from one bike to another. But you moved to a new team and to a new bike and were still able to win the title. How was that possible?

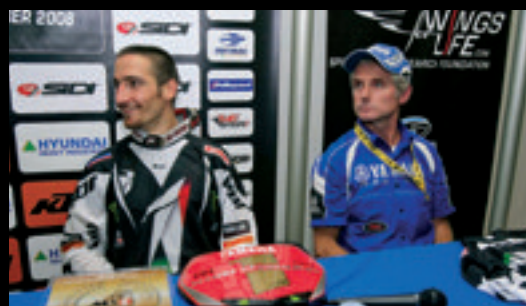
**DP:** "The fact that my bike is so easy to ride helped me. When I first rode the standard bike I liked it, it was easy to ride. There wasn't so much time to test the bike before the start of the season so the fact that I could jump straight onto the standard bike and feel comfortable doing a 40-minute moto helped. It made the process of adjusting to a new bike very easy."

**DBR:** Finally, what has been the highlight and the worst moment of '08 for David Philippaerts?

**DP:** "There were a few bad races. Everyone knows about France – that was disappointing. The best race was Lierop. That's where I think I won the title. After the race I felt confident speaking to the team about becoming world champion. I wanted to come home from Lierop with my world championship lead extended by one point. That's all I wanted. When I came home with a 14-point lead I knew I could win the title."



Philippaerts and team boss Michele Rinaldi celebrate in Faenza



"I speak to Mino and things get done..."  
The Rinaldi set-up suits Philippaerts





## MICHEL RINALDI

TEAM MANAGER >>

**DBR:** Congratulations on your successes this season with David. After the disappointments of last season how does it feel personally to have put the Rinaldi Yamaha team back on top?

**MR:** "It's great for everybody. David won the championship and he was also the strongest rider this season. He brought the title back to Yamaha and to the team. I am really disappointed with last year's result – I can not forget what happened. I simply can't forget it."

"It should have been the team's ninth title in 10 seasons. I was so sorry for Josh. We lost a big opportunity but that's racing. One day I will be able to forget what happened but not yet – it is still just one year and I still can't let it go. He didn't win and again this year he didn't win. Honestly we weren't prepared to win with David but now that he has achieved his first world title it's fantastic and very satisfying."

**DBR:** How does it feel to have helped an Italian achieve his life-long goal of winning a world championship?

**MR:** "We have a lot of passion for motorsport in Italy. There are a lot of team managers, sponsors, race organisers and of course riders that all have a lot of passion for motocross. For a rider it is not always easy coming from Italy because there is so much passion, it can sometimes be hard to deal with."

"To be a real champion it means to do well and to keep doing well for several years. David was the best,

the strongest rider this season and I hope that he will be able to deal with the added pressure that comes with being the champion. Maybe things are a little different with today's generation but I honestly think that it is harder for an Italian to win and then to deal with the pressure that comes from his home country than it is for anyone else. But helping David win his first world title was fantastic."

**DBR:** Without wanting to go over old ground how much of a negative effect did having Stefan Everts switch camps at the end of '06 have on the team?

**MR:** "Personally, I was unbelievably disappointed when Stefan left. Not because of the choice he made but because of the way he did it. He announced to the world that he was joining another team just 48 hours after he told us that was what he was going to do. That showed a complete lack of respect towards Yamaha, myself and all the guys in the team. It was hard for the team, very hard. We knew already that we would go for Josh but it made me more determined to win."

**DBR:** Josh came agonisingly close to winning the MX1 title last year and was the rider that deserved the title in many people's eyes. How disappointing was it for the team to come close to the title but then have everything fall apart?

**MR:** "Almost daily I am still thinking about the fact that it

was so, so disappointing. Last year he deserved the title more than anyone. I am also disappointed with myself because we couldn't make it happen for Josh. Even today I think about it and wish that we could go back to a few days before Loket and change things. But I can't and it is so frustrating."

**DBR:** David appears to have fitted into the team well. Did you really know him before the start of '08?

**MR:** "Personally, I didn't know him well at all before I spoke with him last year. David has joined the team and fitted in well with everyone. Obviously, for an Italian it is a little easier for someone like David to come to the team and understand the team and be understood by the team. David has known some of the team personnel for a while so that made fitting in easier."

**DBR:** Although David didn't dominate the MX1 championship he put in a very mature season of racing. Where do you think David can go from here – what more is he capable of?

**MR:** "I am very confident in David. I saw him growing this year. Race by race he proved to be the strongest. It means that there is a very strong base for him to work from. He is very competitive, he starts well, he is strong in all conditions but not always the fastest. He wants to continue to do well and I think he has many more good years ahead of him."

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**Philippaerts' race bike – the machine that brought the world title back to Rinaldi**



**Jonty puts in a few laps at Donington**



## QUICKSPIN!

### EIGHT LAPS ON PHILIPPAERTS' YZ450FM >>

What do you get when you mix an old-school handlebar set-up with immaculate machine preparation, a motor that has a strong tractable power curve and some of the best mechanical hardware money can buy? David Philippaerts' '08 MX1 winning Yamaha Monster Motocross YZ450FM, that's what...

Bringing together a low, swept back handlebar set-up that feels more 1980s than 21st Century with a motor that gives a plentiful spread of extremely smooth, strong power, David Philippaerts' YZ450FM is a bike that initially feels a little strange to ride. But it soon reveals itself as an uncomplicated yet potent MXGP weapon.

In complete contrast to the pushed forward handlebar position favoured by many riders, David's Monster Yamaha has its bars set low and backwards making standing a little harder than normal. When cornering the bike turns easily – incredibly easily. Positioned to reduce arm pump, the old-school handlebar set-up also encourages you to keep your weight backwards which helps the bike drive straight when attacking rough straights.

The motor, as you'd expect from a top-flight MXGP bike, certainly isn't lacking power. But what is surprising is the ease with which the power can be applied, even in slippery conditions. Smooth yet purposeful from the moment the throttle is turned, once the motor arrives at the mid-range it becomes much, much stronger. On top-end the bike really revs and accelerates with serious intent.

So is David's bike just a black version of Josh's near championship winning '07 machine? In some ways it is but the engine is not. With noise limits reduced to 94db for '08 the Rinaldi team had to work really hard to ensure a good spread of power. "At this moment the bike has more power than last year and less noise," explains Mino Raspanti.

The frame is the same as last year but from the start of this season the team used the '09 swingarm and linkage. The forks are 48mm – last year they were 50mm – which makes the bike a little easier to manoeuvre. "Not every part has stepped forward but the bike is better and quieter," confirms Mino.

# HARD CORE PREP!

THE TOUGHEST RACES REQUIRE THE TOUGHEST PRE-EVENT PREPPING – HERE'S HOW WALKER GOT HIS KTM 300 EXC FIGHTING FIT FOR THE ROMANIACS...

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Sutty**

**T**he KTM 300 EXC is a beautiful thing. It was the Team DBR bike of choice for the Romaniacs adventure and with a minimum of pre-race prep it got to the finish of the gruelling event. The Romaniacs is all about preparing for the worse-case scenarios for both rider and bike and this is why the KTM is such a popular vehicle for this type of extreme racing.

The package is there to go racing and with some help from the industry and technical tweaks the already robust bike was able to easily take on one of the world's toughest races.

**01** The front pull strap is a must for the event. As you can see in most pics from the event there is a lot of dragging and carrying of the bike during the five days so this simple hop-up is invaluable.

**02** The Cycra handguards have now endured THREE Romaniacs races and they are ready to go for more adventures.

**03** The graphics for the race bike were designed and manufactured by Evoke Concepts. These graphics are super tough and took a beating through the event but as you can see they are still in great order. >>





02



03



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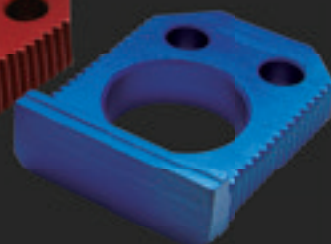


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**04** We ran the motor with the exact gear oil amount on day one and the clutch cooked. From that point on we ran with an extra 150ml of 10/60 Elf four-stroke racing oil and the plates were perfect.

**05** The airbox was sealed all round with silicon and the Twin-Air filter was double skinned with a mud cover.

**06** The cooling system needs some attention for the event. We fitted a cooling fan from a 2003 Sherco trials bike to the back side of the right-hand radiator and wired it to the horn button. This was really simple as the wiring connects directly using the standard spade connectors from both units.

The fans are available from your local trials dealer and with a bit more research we found that Gas Gas trials fans fit even better than the Sherco units and are a lot cheaper. The Spode removed the guts from the in-line thermostat and he also used a Red Bull can to protect the vulnerable cooling hose behind the exhaust pipe.

**07** Electric start is 100 per cent required in Romania to help with survival. It comes standard on the 300 EXC and it gets used in a lot of precarious situations.

**08** Suspension legends KAIS hooked us up with their very own bladder kit for the PDS rear shock. This is an awesome bit of kit as it smoothes out the ride on the rear across the smaller hits and compliments the '09 front forks.

**09** Special Greg Evans hooked us up with this little tech tip. The standard KTM tailpipe can fall apart if the star holder comes loose. The end cap must be drilled and the split pin inserted into position. Thanks Greg!

**10** The front sprocket is siliconed around the circlip to stop it from being pinged off by any rocks or branches. The gear shifter is also run high to avoid as many rocks as possible. We ran with both 50 and 52-tooth rear sprockets during the event.

**11** The front number held a scanner chip for the checkpoints.

**12** KP Equipe Racing hooked us up with a deal on Michelin tyres and mousses. The mousses are compulsory for the event and the street legal enduro tyres are also supposed to be used – according to the fantasy rulebook (let it go Wakker, let it go – SL). We used them and lost a lot of time when the going got muddy compared to the rule benders with MX tyres. We drilled the mousses on certain days if the conditions changed. This would soften the mousse allowing for extra grip. The valve stem holes on the rims are filled with silicon sealant to keep water out.

**13** Sump guard – don't leave home without one!

**14** DEP supply the pipes for the event and I love 'em! The pipes are strong and they help keep the jetting spot on at all altitudes during the race. They take a pounding and Spode always manages to straighten them up for the next day when we run out.



## TRIED AND TESTED!

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My flexible friends! The TCX boots have endured around 70 hours of use now and they are still showing no sign of giving in to the Paddy's punishment. They have run at the WEC, Romaniacs and numerous tests as well as hundreds of laps at the Three Cross Demolition endurocross track.

I have used and abused many pairs of boots in the last few years and have had as little as six hours from some before they have given up the soles! But these sucka's soles are still going well as I am only about 25 per cent through the left side sole. The buckles have held up very well from being ripped by trees and rocks and the inner boots are still comfy. The flex support system which allows your ankle to move around works great as (touch wood) I haven't suffered any injuries in the foot and ankle areas since wearing the TCXs.

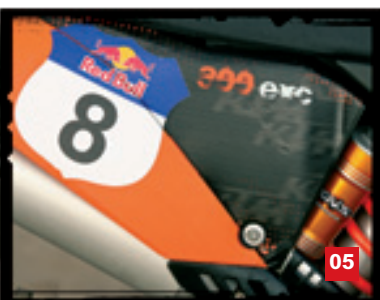
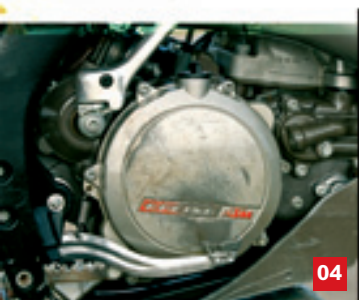
These puppies are going to get a full nine-and-a-half out of 10 for quality and comfort.

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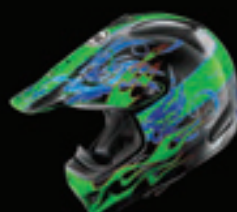
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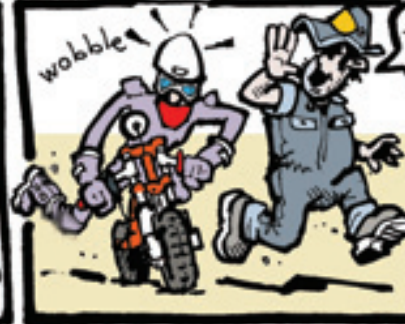
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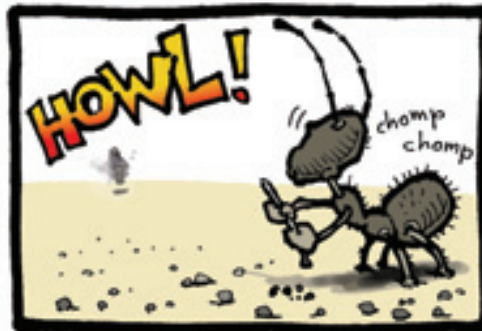


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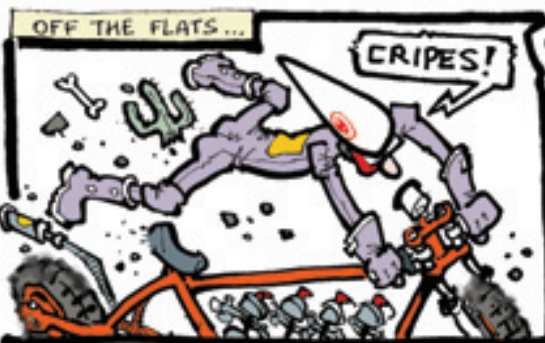


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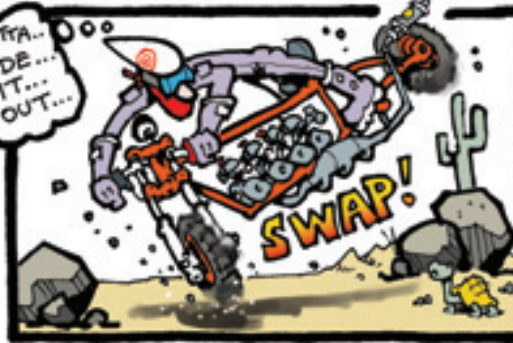
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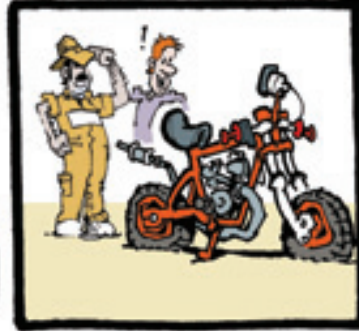
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profile

Steffi with  
her mentor  
Harry Everts



© Ray Archer/KTM Images



Nailing the holeshot at Lierop



# LAIER TAKE!

AS ONE OF THE FASTEST AND MOST AGGRESSIVE WOMEN IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS, STEFFI LAIER HAS ALL THE INGREDIENTS TO BE WORLD CHAMP BUT HASN'T YET RISEN TO PERFECTION...

Words and Photos by Alex Hodgkinson

Over the years Steffi Laier has won more rounds of the women's world series than any of her rivals but only one title – the inaugural World Cup chase in 2005. We spoke to the 23-year-old from Dielheim in central Germany about her international career which stretches back to the winter of 2000/2001 when she took on the boys at the German indoor races.

With just a dozen places at the startgate for the 125s and qualification decided by flying laps, the then 15-year-old spent most of the winter missing the cut by 100ths of a second but when she did make it to the races she was pushing top six. But even more significant than the races that winter was her contact with Stefy Bau – now Youthstream manager of the women's series and then the unofficial world champion.

The Italian had been invited over to race the main class at Stuttgart and the German Steffi was seconds a lap quicker on her 125. "I'd heard of Stefy of course, she was supposed to be the fastest woman on the planet but I was way faster than her. Oh, God, I thought, that must mean I am the fastest woman on the planet."

And the following summer Steffi got the confirmation when she flew to the States and blew Bau and the Yanks away. "I went there for three years with my dad and I never lost a single race! The first two years we just went for a couple of weeks at a time in May and September when I could get free from school but 2003 we went over for five months, hired a car and stayed in motels. KTM provided me with a standard bike and took it to the races.

"The next race was at home and we were pretty much alone during the week. English had been on the school curriculum since I was 11 but the teaching was real old school – we had hardly ever spoken English – and we had real problems back then making ourselves understood or understanding what the Americans said to us."

Steffi was able to explain her feelings about the races after two years however. "The races were generally only four laps in 2001 and 2002 – the only race which was longer was the unofficial world championship and even that was only 15 minutes. I finally persuaded them to make the races 20 minutes for 2003."

The extent of the teenager's domination, no matter what the race distance, was astounding. "I usually lapped up to third in those four lap races, one moto the clutch burnt out at the gate and I was dead last after going over the bars but I still took the lead on the last lap and won."

With the sport growing in Europe and a one race World Cup title at Uddevalla, Steffi has stayed home

since 2005. She won that inaugural event in Sweden hands-down but despite winning more races than Katherine Prumm, Livia Lancelot or any of the other girls Steffi has lost out on titles for the last three years.

The defence of her title in '06 had started at Teutschenthal in her homeland but Steffi lacked pace for once – she ended the day on the podium but was well beaten by her two main rivals. "I had no time for training and it showed. I had completed my studies at technical school as a certified business assistant and had started to study for a degree in Computer Studies at Mannheim University.

"I was still living at home in the countryside – I still do – and I was having to leave home at six in the morning and wasn't getting home in the evening until six. By then I didn't feel like training – there was simply not enough time in the day to study and train and something had to give."

And it was college.

"I wasn't enjoying it. It was pretty torrid stuff – not interesting. I doubt I would have carried on even if I hadn't wanted to get back to my motocross career."

For 2007 Steffi was back on the pace, winning a moto at Teutschenthal on her own bike but in a six-moto series her chances of the title had already taken a severe jolt when the SXS KTM loaned by the factory seized solid on the second lap of the first moto and put a big fat zero at the start of her scorecard.

The pressure to win, win, win proved too much at Uddevalla. "I was out cold so I can't remember a thing about the crash. Everybody who saw it has told me I was in control until I landed, I guess the front wheel found a rut. Then I had to miss Lierop after tearing the ligaments in my thumb the week before the race."

That happened in a support race at the German Masters. "That was definitely not my fault, it happened at the first turn and this guy never braked. He used me as a berm and wiped me out."


It's something which happens regularly when Steffi races with the lads. "I'm actually one of the riders in the support class who brakes late and I carry good speed into a corner but it's amazing how often I get rammed from behind by guys who can't run in the top 15. It's as though I am the red rag to a bull and they can't take it being beaten by a girl."

"It was the same at Frankenfeld this year, the race where I got hurt one week before the first GP in Bulgaria. This guy who never races top 10 came down on my back as I was landing on the downslope of a tabletop – if he hadn't hit me he'd have ended up in the bushes. That would never happen in a women's race – we're not so stupid!"

Despite so many bad experiences in mixed races Steffi is determined not to give them up.

>>

Steffi's won more motos than anyone else in this year's women's world championship but missed out on the big prize



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profile

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Powering down the pit lane at Lierop



© Surty

"No way, apart from the accidents I benefit from them. Guys race harder than girls and it keeps me sharp. I know I race harder and faster in those races myself but some guys take risks and are prepared to take the opposition out, no matter what the consequences. Girls don't do that!"

Having lost out twice on the world stage through injury it was a hard decision for Steffi to miss Bulgaria particularly as she appeared one week later in Italy and swept both motos.

"I wanted to go but it was never going to happen. My doctor told me on the Tuesday I had to leave it but there again he also said I shouldn't ride for six weeks because if I landed on my shoulder again before it healed it could be serious.

"I tried to ride on the Thursday but it just wasn't on. My arm was so swollen that I could hardly move it and the pain. Every slightest movement was agony. There was no way."

By the middle of the following week recovery had been rapid so it was off to Mantova.

"I was not too confident of being able to race but I had to compete if I was going to have any

chance of the title. In MX1 and MX2 it would in theory be possible to miss out a race and still have a shot at the crown because they have 15 rounds but we only had five.

"The chance of catching up 50 points was pretty remote but anything can happen and I had to try. I did the absolute minimum on Saturday to qualify and I was effectively holding on with one arm but race day was amazing. I was in agony after the races but the competition had helped me put it out of my head during the races. I'm pretty resilient anyway but I think women can take pain better than men. Perhaps it's an inborn thing, after all women have to deliver babies into the world and they say that's tough."

It is noticeable that Steffi – just like David Philippaerts in MX1 – is rarely near the front in qualification. "No, I'm a racer. Some of the other girls can hang it out for a lap and my strength is not my speed over a single lap but my ability to keep it up for the entire race. And the depth of competition is not so great that you have to have pole. Top six is more than enough."

After wins in Mantova, St Jean D'Angely and Teutschenthal Steffi went to the series finale in

Lierop still 20 points shy of the championship pace and knew it would be tough to deny Livia Lancelot the crown.

"There just aren't enough girls on the pace yet. It's always Livia, Katherine and me at the front then a gap to Maria Franke, Larissa Papenmeier and Ashley Fiolek and then another gap. And from 10th place down they are in another race. With the men there is perhaps three seconds a lap from first to last – in our races it's a minute. Even if Livia had made a mistake at Lierop the chances of her dropping out of the top six at the finish were pretty remote."

So why is the speed differential so big?

"I don't think it's a lack of interest but many of the girls have not been racing seriously for so long and aren't used to training. There are only a few countries with races for the girls so there is not much chance to race unless you go with the guys.

"I've done that since I started and I ride aggressively like they do but a lot of the girls are afraid to go out in mixed races once they reach their teens. And you have seen how

>>



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## STEFFI ON...

#110 >>

"That was my first permanent number in the States – I wanted 111 but Grant Langston had that so they gave me 110. I won everything I ever started in America with that number so I hope it will bring me the same good luck in the end in Europe."

HARRY EVERTS >>

"Harry approached me and offered to help and I am so grateful. He knows everything and can give tips on riding, bike set-up, lines, sponsors – everything. I don't think it is a coincidence that Stefan won 10 world titles – Harry pointed him in the right direction all through his career."



Topping the podium at Mantova



many girls don't go for the big jumps. It's not because our bikes are not so powerful – I could take a bike out of the showroom and jump anything they throw at us in the world series – but they do make the jumps difficult sometimes so you have to believe in yourself and your ability.

"There was one jump in France and only three of us did it all weekend. There wasn't much of a run-up and you were landing in the turn – it was difficult and you had to get it right and the rest simply didn't trust themselves to try it."

In the end, despite winning more than half the races in the series and only losing two that she started, world ranking number two was all that was left for Steffi. Even a seventh victory could not have changed that but the final moto of the campaign at Lierop emphasised just how much determination she has.

Leading again by the proverbial country mile on the roughest, toughest track on the world schedule, Steffi suddenly had to back off her pace as the rear shock broke. Four laps to go with the rear tyre constantly making contact with the fender, Steffi kept going where barely a male colleague would even consider it to still finish a remarkable sixth. Now that's guts!

With the series expanding to eight rounds next summer, Steffi is determined to be there but she does express one concern.

"I just hope the teams can start paying a salary. With so many races – including one in America – we need it. I got bikes and parts from KTM but no expenses. My mum and dad have paid for everything so far and that is the norm. If they want the series to become more professional and grow that has to change. Ask the men how many of them pay their own way – none of them, I bet!"



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# TIME FOR TEA?

NEED TO LOSE WEIGHT FAST? APPARENTLY GREEN TEA AND MODERATE EXERCISE IS THE IDEAL WAY TO SHED THOSE EXCESS POUNDS

Words by Alan Milway

As another summer draws to a close and the racing calendar begins to thin out again now is a good time to look back on how things have gone this year with your health, riding and results in mind. Now is also a good time to look forward and think about specific training and – if you are not in one already – getting yourself into a healthy routine.

Losing weight is a common catalyst for many people to start training and when you look at a sport where the rider is essentially a jockey you can see that having the best power to weight ratio will make all the difference out of the gate! However, beyond this burning fat is a good starting point to a healthy lifestyle that will make you feel better and will help you both on and off the bike.

Burning fat helps reduce body weight, decrease the amount of body fat you have and also increase your lean body mass. All of which are advantageous from a health point of view as well as a sporting point of view.

The ability to burn fat can actually be trained and an athlete can actually mobilise fatty acids more readily, burn them more easily and also spare carbohydrate usage which means one can exercise for longer than someone who does not exercise regularly. In contrast to this, those people with obesity or diabetes may have difficulty using fat as a fuel. It is therefore important to understand how we can best train to burn fat to help us become fitter, leaner and healthier. Training to burn fat will make you look better off the bike and ride faster on it!

As we start any exercise session fatty acids are mobilised. The majority of fat stores are in subcutaneous adipose tissue but we do also have some fat stores in the muscles themselves.

As exercise begins fatty acids are transported to the muscles across the muscle membrane and then into the muscles' 'engine room' to be broken down.

This process is relatively slow and produces energy at a relatively slow rate. We need to bear this in mind because if we exercise at too high an intensity we can't provide the required energy from this source and as a training session to burn fat it will actually be poor.

Therefore, to best utilise this energy pathway we must look at the exercise intensity and also the duration. For best fat burning, long, steady exercise is the way forwards. In simple terms this means any exercise that you can do for around 45 minutes to an hour (or more) at a time.

For a completely untrained rider any exercise might be a challenge to do for this duration so non-impact sports such as swimming or cycling are ideal. As you progress, running will give another great training method.

The intensity of the exercise should be classed as 'moderate' so if you're running or cycling you should still be able to hold a conversation while training and not get out of breath quickly. If you go too hard you will reduce the amount of fat used and increase the proportion of carbohydrate used so it will not be a good session if fat burning is the main aim.

Diet is also very important. It is clear that a high intake of fatty foods especially saturated or trans-fatty acid rich are not beneficial and should be avoided. However, it is also worth noting that a high carbohydrate diet will actually suppress the use of fat as a fuel. So reducing portions of rice, potatoes, pasta and bread will actually help you to burn fat more readily and aid fat burning.

You will also burn fat more readily when you are in a state of fast – like first thing in the

morning. Training before breakfast will cause fat to be the predominant fuel source which is ideal for weight loss. Do be aware though that on an empty stomach you will not be able to train to the same capacity as if you are fully fed so do not expect too much and take it steady to begin with until you know an achievable session. But with this in mind it makes it a good time of day to train.

When it comes to the best exercise for fat burning, running has been shown to burn fat at a higher rate than cycling. So if you are looking for the ideal excuse to buy a new pair of running shoes this is it!

There are companies that try to sell us supplements for building muscle and also losing weight. It is worth noting that the vast majority of nutritional supplements aimed at increasing fat loss show no evidence of working! For example ginseng and chromium show no evidence of helping at all even though they are often touted as offering weight loss solutions.

However, for all the tea drinkers out there it has been shown that an ingredient found in green tea does help fat burning. Believe it or not, it can help increase fat burning by up to 20 per cent so is one supplement well worth looking at.

As a final thought do remember that you cannot achieve any weight loss without a negative energy balance – that means you must take in less energy (in the form of calories) than you burn. This is regardless of where you get your calories from so a balanced diet is important.

So, to set you up as a lean, mean, riding machine for '09 try to plan a regular weekly training session from now, head to the shops to get some decent running shoes and then put the kettle on!

## MEDICALMILWAY

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website [www.mxfitness.co.uk](http://www.mxfitness.co.uk) or call him on 07810 827427





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James Stewart makes his Yamaha debut in Vegas – but it's the same old result as he ends the weekend with a 1-1 card





# THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

RIDERS SWITCH TEAMS BUT THE END RESULT IS THE SAME AS THE SEASON SIGNS OFF – OR KICKS OFF – AT THE MGM GRAND IN LAS VEGAS

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene..

STATESIDE



Vegas baby!

Some people consider the US Open the last race of the year, some consider it the first race of the next year and some don't consider it to be either. One thing's for sure though – this year's US Open featured a lot of hype before the event, both for the debut of rivals James Stewart and Chad Reed on their new teams and for the Legends Race between hardcore rivals Damon Bradshaw and Jeff Matiasovich.

Since its inception no rider has ever successfully completed the 'Trifecta' on both nights of the US Open. The Trifecta comprises setting fastest lap during 'Superpole' qualifying, getting the Main Event holeshot and then winning the Main Event. If one rider can do that on both nights the pay-off is a cool quarter-million bucks. Last year Reed nearly pulled it off having achieved the Trifecta on the first night but then crashed in the first turn on night two trying to get the needed holeshot.

This year James Stewart – in his San Manuel Yamaha debut – pulls off the fastest Superpole time to start the evening just in front of Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Reed. When the gate drops for the Main Event it's Reed's team-mate Ryan Dungey – on an RM-Z250 – who looks to have the holeshot when, at the last moment before crossing the line to make his holeshot official, he gets cleaned out by Stewart who comes around the inside to assume the lead.

In the fall Dungey's left grip goes through Reed's rear brake caliper and wheel, ripping off the grip and destroying Reed's rear brake. Reed goes into turn two

in second but soon figures out that his rear brake isn't working as he almost cleans out Stewart and nearly goes off the track. He pulls out of the race right then and there and with Stewart out front the finish is a foregone conclusion.

"I just think it was a racing incident," Stewart says of the first turn collision. "He [Dungey] went wide and I was creeping around the inside but then Chad came up, I gassed it and we ended up hitting. I think he was bummed out and I'd be the same way. He was a little upset but I told him I would never do that [intentionally]. We go back so we're totally cool now."

Dungey gets up dead last and without a left grip but still decides to give it a go. "I was definitely bummed," Dungey says. "I had the holeshot and I came into the corner really hot and I wanted to stick to the inside but the track was slick and I couldn't make it on the inside so I just forced myself out to the berm. I made the pivot off of the berm and I looked over and just saw a blue Yamaha coming straight for my front wheel. Before I knew it I was almost riding on his bike and my front wheel came out from underneath me. I just tried to put my head down and work forward after that."

"I didn't know what it was going to be like without a grip and I started off the first lap and it was kind of weird but it got a little better by the second lap and by the third lap I kind of fell into the groove with it."

While Stewart runs away with it out front, Dungey works his way through the pack and with one lap to go he finds himself in sixth and pressuring Yamaha's Broc Hepler. On the final lap Dungey makes a pass stick on ♦



Aussie Daniel Reardon ends  
the second night in seventh



Things are looking good for Stewart –  
and bad for his rivals – with the '09  
SX season just around the corner

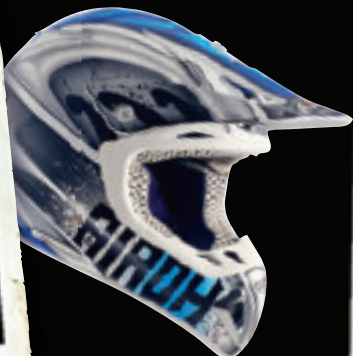
Chad Reed makes his Suzuki debut  
but can't stay upright either night



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Hepler to end up fifth, just behind MDK KTM's Justin Brayton, Yamaha's Josh Hill, Honda's Ivan Tedesco and Stewart – all on 450s.

With the Trifecta for night one out of the way, the pressure is on for night two. Stewart again grabs the Superpole fast lap so just like in 2007 it comes down to the Main Event holeshot. Dungey lines up to the inside of Stewart, Reed lines up to the outside and they're successful in squeezing Stewart so Reed comes out in second behind Hepler. Before the end of the first lap Reed makes an aggressive pass on Hepler for the lead while Stewart moves into third.

By the third lap Stewart is second but trails Reed by quite a margin. However, Stewart is the only rider doing the rhythm section in two jumps – triple/triple – while most are going double/triple/single, including Reed. He makes up at least half-a-second a lap on Reed doing the section that way and with only about five laps to go he pulls alongside Reed on the following straightaway, only for Reed to push him out of the way and retain the lead.

With the pressure on, though, on the following lap Reed goes down in a heap in the rhythm section with Stewart going triple/triple past him as he crashes.

"I don't even know what happened," Reed says. "I just came around there and tried to stay low and I don't know if I clipped the top of it or what but I grabbed a handful and it just shot me off to the left. It was just rider error. I don't know really what happened. It happened so quick. As soon as I landed on the Tuff Block it flipped me straight over

onto my back. It was a gnarly landing. It knocked the wind out of me pretty good. Then Ryan [Dungey] was right on me and I thought he was in third so I just tried to stay there on the podium."

Dungey does come out just behind Reed but Dungey's actually fourth. Honda's Andrew Short assumes second and Reed successfully holds off Dungey for third. Tedesco is fifth as – obviously – Stewart wins.

"Well, you always want to do good for the first time," Stewart says. "I knew if I didn't come in here and do good to me it wouldn't be a big deal but other people might be asking if I should've made the switch and stuff. I know what this track is, though – it's an arenacross track and to be fast on this track and to be winning it's a good step. I've got four days on the bike and I'm stoked. I think we're going to be really good going into the future."

Although he's lost the battle, Reed feels good about what he learns too. "More than speed I think we learned a lot about what I needed to do for racing and some things on the bike," Reed says. "The test track is one thing. You always have a good feeling at the test track and then you come out to the races and things are a little different.

"I think it's awesome. The rust is starting to fall off a little bit after five months off the bike and I'm just really excited to be out here racing and I'm having a good time really."

The season starts in January. Throw in RV on a KX450F and Kevin Windham on the new CRF450R and this could be one for the record books.



"What do you mean you don't like blue?"



Reed races the US Open with the #8 plate as a tribute to sidelined mate Grant Langston

Nico Izzi slips inside a buck wild Michael Sleeter



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Matiashevich leads Bradshaw – but not for long as the Beast from the East thoroughly outclasses the Chicken!



Dungey is first 250F pilot home on the opening night – despite losing his left grip in a first-turn pile-up



Stewart and Reed slug it out for the holeshot

## STUFF OF LEGENDS

### THE BEAST V THE CHICKEN

Few supercross racers in the history of the sport have had as volatile an on-track relationship as Damon 'The Beast from the East' Bradshaw and Jeff 'Chicken' Matiashevich did. It seemed any time they were near each other on the track in the '90s someone was going down – and usually it was Matiashevich, if not both of them.

During the pre-race press conference at the MGM Grand Garden Arena the two sit together for the first time and they refuse to look at each other 15 years after their racing careers diverted paths. The tension is palpable. That is until the two riders take to the track in practice. At that point it's clear – advantage Bradshaw.

The first night's race gets going with Matiashevich getting the holeshot but Bradshaw quickly passing him and pulling away when Matiashevich nearly goes down in the whoops. Bradshaw slows up noticeably to make a race of it but Matiashevich simply isn't game. The race goes for six laps which seems about four too long and Bradshaw takes the win.

After night one the word gets around that something is being done to make a better show of it on night two – it's just an exhibition race, after all. Apparently, no-one tells Bradshaw about this and grabs the holeshot and takes off to win the shortened event with ease, putting in lap times that are competitive with the Main Event racers on his YZ450F.

"I was over it," Bradshaw says of the second night of racing. "I just figured I'd go out there and ride hard and see what I could do. I think the last time I raced was like 2002 or 2003 and then I tried to come back and ride and broke my leg again my first time out so I was like 'okay, that's it'.

"I didn't do anything for several years. I did a little bit of trail riding here and there but before this deal I didn't even have a bike so I was really worried because, you know, I'm 36 years old. I don't think that's old and I don't call myself an old man but being away from a motorcycle it's like 'what am I going to feel like?' so I was nervous.

"I hate to say it but I thought he [Jeff Matiashevich] would've been better prepared than what he was. I don't know. It was kind of weird for me but I almost got to the point where I felt sorry because either he didn't have the time or just the will or the want to go and do it."

It's not impossible that you may see Bradshaw at a European supercross before the year's out and rumours have already started about him taking on the AMA Nationals in 2009.

"I don't know what I would want to do," Bradshaw says. "The thing is if I don't feel like I could be a part of the race I don't want to be involved and I don't know what you would call being part of the race anymore. I mean, obviously, the top five guys or even the top 10 guys or whatever that number is, I wouldn't say they're light years ahead – I mean, the top five guys for sure are – but it's easy to wonder in the back of your mind where you would go.

"But then again, you also think to yourself 'I really like being healthy'. I was talking to a kid out here a little bit ago and he said 'hey, I'm going to Germany to race a few supercrosses – why don't you go?' and that could be something that would be kind of fun. It's like this deal – I was able to put together a couple of little deals to come and do it and I don't get that opportunity very much anymore with motorcycles so that was pretty cool."

Are we about to see Damon Bradshaw part four? Only time will tell...

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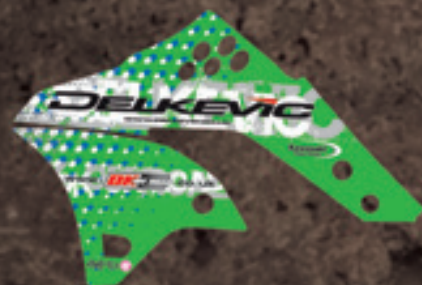
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# WACKY RACES!

WHEN JAMES STEWART LEFT KAWASAKI FOR YAMAHA AND CHAD REED LEFT YAMAHA FOR SUZUKI IT MADE FOR THE WACKIEST OFF-SEASON EVER – SO WHAT'S THE '09 ON-SEASON GOING TO BE LIKE?

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

The 2008 US Open has come and gone and if you like motocross in a bowling alley like one RXI editor compared it to then the Open is for you. We all know the story and what happened but I thought I would look behind the scenes and try to figure out how we got here...

Anyways, if you closed one eye and squinted with the other you'd swear that James and Chad were on their old bikes. It looked like nothing changed really – James's still slightly faster than Chad Reed – only they had some different colours under them and that was akin to seeing an orange apple or blue banana. It just didn't look right.

It was in the same city earlier this year at the SX that the moto industry got a couple of bombshells dropped onto our laps. One was that soon-to-be SX champ Chad Reed was out at his old team and just to shock us even more James Stewart was going to replace him. You probably could've had some aliens come down and tractor beam Jason Lawrence up and we wouldn't have been more surprised (some people would actually applaud if that happened). The top two superstars were changing teams and, wait a minute, how could that be possible when at the season-ending banquet Reedy gave a tearful speech about coming back to L&M?

Things were getting weird in the pits. Some would say that things got really weird when Larry Brooks – team manager and owner of L&M – and Reed started poop-talking each other in the media. Hmm, I guess there was something to this. So what happened? Well having spoken quite a bit to both parties I can honestly say that I think the history L&M and Reed made could've kept going if only the two principals had locked themselves into a room and thrashed it out.

When you are coming off a Supercross title and have a bunch of people telling you how fast you are (and the fact that your main competition, Stewart, got hurt and missed 14 races is forgotten by you and your posse) you tend to believe it. From what I gather, Larry Brooks gave Reed an offer for exactly the same amount that he rode for in 2008. There were some extra appearances in the deal for the team's main sponsor – San Manuel Band of Mission Indians – but other than that it was the same. The economy is down, sponsorship is down and teams are folding so those factors probably caused L&M to think that Reed would take it.

Only Reedy and his agent Stephen Astephen didn't take it. They felt The Chad was worth more and that someone out there would agree with them. If there is one thing that I know it's that our little industry is smaller than you think and word gets around when you are shopping around. So when Brooks heard about Reedy not being happy with the offer he knew that he had to get somebody that could win the title – but his options were, er, limited. After all, San Manuel may operate a casino but they are not one to gamble whether or not anyone other than Chad Reed or James Stewart could win the Supercross championship next year.

Brooks had to act fast so he inserted a 14-day window in which Reed could accept his deal on the table or it would be pulled. Near the end of the window a phone call was placed to Astephen to see what the status of the offer was and Brooks was told in no uncertain terms that Team Reed was not ready to make a decision quite yet. What Astephen failed to comprehend was that Larry Brooks is a tenacious ex pro rider – someone you would not fool with on the track – and that he took those qualities with him off the track. I should know. I was a mechanic for Brooks at Chaparral in 1999 and witnessed some of that bulldog mentality. So the day after Reed's offer was pulled off the table, Larry Brooks landed in Orlando and begun talks with the only man that could dethrone Reed – James Stewart.

Wait a minute, how did we get here? Surely Kawasaki would not let James Stewart go – the man that has ridden green practically his whole life and delivered numerous championships – would they? Well, if there is anything we have learned over the years seeing Michael Jordan leave the Bulls and Wayne Gretzky leaving the Oilers, it's the fact that no sports icons are ever safe. James was looking for a contract from Kawasaki but to the surprise of pretty much everyone an offer did not come. Kawasaki is to be commended for the brass ones that upper management must have, they let another superstar Ricky Carmichael walk in 2001 and this time they would let the man that replaced RC go as well.

Three-time outdoor champion Ryan Villopoto was looking to graduate to the big bikes and Kawasaki probably looked at their bank balance and decided that only one could be

signed and that one would be the 'next' one, not the 'current' one. So James needed a team and an interesting point is that James doesn't have an agent, just some family friends that help him out and a lawyer to sort out the legalities of each deal. James probably realized that there weren't too many teams out there that could pay him what he wanted and allow him the latitude to make the decisions that all these big guys want to do nowadays. By all accounts, the deal came together quickly and that left the current Supercross champ looking for a ride.

Fast forward to the first outdoor national at Glen Helen. It was there that I spoke to Chad and he was frustrated at the deal falling apart. He tried to see if he could return to Factory Yamaha but nothing could get done there and he was talking to Suzuki but they were balking at his monetary demands. He told me right there by the Scott USA bus that he was maybe going to go home and race cars in Australia and you know what? I believed him. The frustration was evident on that day and he also expressed unhappiness with his agent and the fact that L&M added some last-minute appearances to the contract.

So we know what happened since then, Reed went to Suzuki for probably less money than what he could've had at L&M. In Reed's case less money equals more motivation and if there is something I know about Chad Reed it's that he thrives on proving people wrong. The mixture of Reed and Suzuki is an interesting one and if the boys in yellow thought RC was demanding, wait until they see Reed. He'll make them step up their game.

At the US Open we all got our first glimpse of James in blue and not much has changed – he's still fast and fearless. When he did a triple-triple section in the Main it was something that took your breath away the first time you saw him do it. The fact that I know what goes into the testing and R&D of a new bike makes his ride even more impressive. Reed isn't in riding shape yet and admitted it. He also has some improvements to make on the motorcycle and he has to get better, he knows that.

This might have been the wackiest off-season ever and I think everyone should hold tight – this ride is just beginning...



Chad Reed on a Suzuki? Who'd have thought that would happen?

*Kenneth Gundersen's last pro race was the opening round of the '08 British championship – then he wrecked his knee at Valkenswaard and his career was over*



© Suffy



# End of the Line...

JUST FOUR YEARS AGO KENNETH GUNDERSEN WAS THE NEXT BIG THING WITH GP WINS TO HIS NAME AND A FULL-ON FACTORY RIDE – BUT A SUCCESSION OF KNEE INJURIES HAVE FORCED HIM TO CALL TIME ON HIS CAREER

Words and photos by **Alex Hodgkinson**

**W**hen Kenneth Gundersen left Canada Heights in March, neither he or anyone else looking on could have known that it was to be the last professional race in the career of the best rider ever to come out of Norway.

A fortnight later his left foot slipped off the footrest in the second free training of the opening GP at Valkenswaard and the 26-year-old Viking from Fjellhamar in the land of the fjords – who had planned a 2008 rampage of Britain and the European mainland – saw it all brought to a severely premature halt. It was five months later before he knew it was over for good but let's start the sad tale with Kenneth's own description of that fateful split second on April 5.

"I was on a quick lap near the end of the session but just before the finish line I came a little bit sideways on the jump. As I landed my foot missed the footpeg and my foot touched the ground. It was really muddy so the foot just stopped and I knew straight away that everything was broken. When it hurts like it did you don't need a scan to know something is really wrong.

"The ACL was wrecked as well as both meniscus and the knee was so big that I had to wait for six weeks for the swelling to go down before I could have surgery. When they got to look inside the knee was actually better than they expected – the cartilage was fine, they fixed the meniscus and put in two new ligaments and then it was physio every day. It wasn't so bad as the last time – it just needed time to heal and get back the strength."

Sadly it was not prove as straightforward as that in the end. And what was that about 'last time'? Way back in 2004/05 Kenneth had gone through two years of torture with the right knee. At the time Kenneth, still only 22 and already a four-time GP winner in both 125 and 250 classes, was the next best thing.

"Before I injured my knee back then I was coming closer and closer to my goal. I was running third or fourth in the championship and in the race where I broke my knee I had passed Stefan [Everts] twice. I was closer than I had ever been and I felt my time was coming."

Kenneth high-sided balls-out at Teutschenthal and the injury was bad. "At first the Norwegian surgeon didn't know if it would be possible for me to ride again at all. I tried a few more GPs but it wasn't working so I went to a specialist in Sweden and he was straight with me. Four centimetres of the cartilage was gone and he told me that if I rode one more time without surgery I for sure would need a plastic knee.

"It was a big surgery. I had to stay in bed for three months, then the cartilage grew too much and I had to have surgery again – another three months off. I had a two-year contract and I had only raced the first four GPs but to be honest I should not have ridden at all in '05. I came back but I could hardly walk – it was completely stupid.

"But I never said it was over. That was not an option for me. I was determined to come back. I looked back at other riders like Harry Everts who had raced to four world titles after having polio as a kid. That gave me strength."

Effectively out of the game for two years, Kenneth resolved to ease his way back in MX2 with Yamaha who he had made his initial breakthrough as a teenager with before going factory with

KTM and Kawasaki. Kenneth was placed with Ricci Racing and his early form was sensational – podium at Zolder, moto win in Spain but then life got more difficult again as nagging injuries intervened.

"I was struggling. I had some good results but some bad ones too but it got me back into GP motocross. I knew all the time that MX1 was the right class for me but if you want to race a 450 you really have to be prepared and my leg was still not good in '06 or '07.

"I had hoped to be able to get back in MX1 after one year but I wasn't ready. I was always fast those last two years but I didn't have the power to go 40 minutes – even in MX2 – so there was no sense trying to go MX1. I was being realistic. If you can't run, you can't compete in the front in MX1. I have been there and I know how much you need to train to be able to race against Coppins and those guys.

"But last winter I was able to go running again and I felt I could prepare myself physically how I wanted to again even if I didn't get to ride again until the start of March. After the last GP I had surgery on my shoulder because I had broken some ligaments but by November I could start to do interval training and go running with my dad driving behind in the car like we did 10 years ago. I made some physical tests and they showed I had made a huge improvement so I think physically I was back where I was in 2004.

"And that right knee was no problem any more. I could put the leg out in the corners, the last two years I still couldn't do that – even last year I would rather fall than put my leg out if I lost balance. It was in the head because if I ran for one kilometre last year the next day the knee had swollen to double the size. There was a physical problem because the muscles were still too small. All the pressure went on the knee itself but then I did a lot of weight training to rebuild the muscles – you put weight on your shoulders and do bend ups and that builds the muscles in your legs.

"Before Valkenswaard my leg was six centimetres bigger than it was the year before – that's a huge difference! Then the muscle can take over the pressure. I knew I had to do this but you can't do everything at once and just getting back into motocross, back on a bike, had been the first priority back in 2006."

With Ricci committed to MX2 Kenneth had to switch teams but joining Steve Dixon was just what the Norwegian had been looking for. "Steve already tried to sign me many years ago and he was very positive when we started to talk, he believed that I could still do it and I believe that I could not have been in a better team. This was my last chance and I knew that if it didn't work out I'd better find another job.

"I really believed I could get back up there together with Steve. We didn't have complete factory material but what we had was good enough and if there was something that was not working 100 per cent then we worked to change that. I didn't get the pressure like from a factory team – if I was going to get back to the top then this was the place I could show it.

"In reality factory material is no different. I think the factory guys just have more pressure. No-one expected anything of me and we had a free choice of what we used and Steve >>

ON SALE NOW



**With UTAG team boss Steve Dixon – Kenneth was confident the UK team was where he needed to be**

was right in there, really involved. When I was in England riding Steve was there – up to his knees in mud, looking, filming.

"In a factory team you get told here is your bike, here is the money, see you at the race – do your job. But with Steve it is more personal. I really believe that if I couldn't make it with Steve then I wouldn't make it in any other team.

"The factories put so much money in and they don't care if the rider is in the pub all week or if he is training, what they focus on is the material – I think it is strange that they do not work more closely with the rider. KTM are doing that now since Stefan came in and you see the results but I think every team should be doing that. If there are three riders in a team why shouldn't they go together training, pushing each other, reaching a higher level for everyone."

When Kenneth and I spoke at Uddevalla back in the summer he was on the brink of restarting training and was still bubbling with enthusiasm about 2009.

"I'm not saying it was good that this happened but we have to look at it positively. For the last four or five years I never had a complete winter of training, I always had some surgery but now I have the opportunity to be ready to go from the first race next year."

A couple of weeks later Kenneth got back into training but those great plans, those hopes, were to be savagely undermined.

"After a few weeks I started to get pain in my other knee – the one I wrecked in '04. I made the scan and it didn't look so good. Last winter it was improving all the time but now, since the other knee was destroyed, I've been putting more weight on that and then I got a reaction.

"The doctor didn't pull any punches. He said that if I want to have an active life in the future then I need to take it easy. I knew he was right. I didn't even have to sleep on it once the doctor put it straight to me. It took me one hour! To race at GP level you have to be 100 per cent and I have no interest to go and finish 20th. And if you are not 100 per cent that is when you get even more injuries. I am tired of that, I don't want to spend any more time in hospital.

"I don't have to stop completely. I can still do training and it could work out if I get a lot of muscles but for GPs it is over. I think I will be able to race in Norway, hopefully maybe even Uddevalla or something if I feel okay."

And the future away from racing? "It is too soon to be sure yet. It's only two weeks since I made the decision and until then I had planned to race GPs next year but I had already agreed to act as team manager for Norway at the Nations and perhaps maybe I can work with young riders for the federation in the same way that Brian Jorgensen and Soren Mortensen do in Denmark. Motocross is a growing sport in Scandinavia and I would like to stay involved."

So perhaps we haven't seen the last of Kenneth yet... |



**All smiles before his 2008 season came to a sudden halt**



**Kenneth was struggling with a serious knee injury – this time his right – in '06**





*The MXV450 has got real hooligan tendencies just waiting to get out*

# SPLIT PERSONALITY!

WITH A POWER DELIVERY THAT SWITCHES FROM 'BIG BANG' TO 'SCREAMER', APRILIA'S FIRST PRODUCTION MX BIKE – THE V-TWIN MXV450 – IS A USER-FRIENDLY TORQUE-MONSTER WITH HOOLIGAN TENDENCIES...

Words by **Geoff Walker** Pics by **Some Italian Dude**

**G**ood things come to those who wait... This could well be the case for Aprilia off-road customers of the present and the future. For '09 the Italian bike manufacturers have really started their push for world motocross glory with the launch of their first production MX bike – the MXV450.

Successes in supermoto and enduro have taken the Italian glamour brand to the top of the podium in these disciplines and now they are beginning what seems to be a further push for MX glory after a couple of years with seemingly lacklustre riders (this does not include the legend that is Alessio Chiodi) on board the prototype machines. With any development project the team must work hard as a unit and Aprilia seem to now be pulling in the same direction with the signing of Julian Bill from Honda and Manuel Priem from Kawasaki to race MXGP on the new MXV450.

The innovative V-twin powered MXV has taken a few years to develop but has it been worth the wait? Team DBR were invited to the world launch in Milan to find out how the MXV and the revised RXV enduro bikes shape up for their fight for the off-road battle for supremacy...





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unlike Angry Geoff  
who is at times  
both unbalanced  
and unstable



## MXV450>>

Aprilia do not do things by the book and they have followed their hearts with the design of the bike. It seems they will not be forced to make their bike a copy of a Japanese bike as this would be too easy – instead they've gone for a completely new look for the MX world. This will be accepted by those with an open mind and dismissed by those lacking in the ability to reserve judgement until they have taken the bike for a ride.

Personally I think the bike is a 'grower' and as the two-day test developed the style and concepts surrounding the bike's look became apparent. This hard working group of Italians do things in their own way and that is that. The bike's design and therefore looks have a direction towards centralisation of weight. The team have worked to get the fuel tank towards the middle of the bike and the lighter airbox to the front. The bike is super slim compared to the enduro models and the clean lines give it an overall lighter look than I expected.

The part of the design I don't really like is the front mudguard as it's too thin and the support system it runs seems to be designed solely to catch mud. The most awesome part of the design for me is the twin tail pipes. These little zooster pipes look absolutely brilliant in my opinion – a little 'old school' – and the unique sound of the V-twin pumping the power out through the pipes put a big grin across my comedy Oirish chops!

On to the motor and the only twin-cylinder in MX. Set in a 77 degree 'V' configuration, the engine is very compact and is smaller than a few of the single-cylinder motors with the same capacity.

The unique feature with this motor is that you get two completely different motor characteristics with a minimum of work. The engineers reckon that in just over an hour you can transform the bike from 'big bang' to 'screamer'. This basically means that with a small change of one of the single overhead cam positions and some new mapping the motor goes from a mild-mannered, torquey, lower-revving engine to a more hooligan-suited lump that's gagging to be revved. That is just about as simply as I can put it.

The big bang set-up has the motor firing in an irregular pattern making for a very rideable power and the screamer set-up has the motor firing in a regular firing gap pattern making for full power.

The motor is fed by a Dell'Orto fuel injection system and this is managed by a programmable ECU which has a soft and hard switch on the handlebars so you have what could be classed as an MX form of traction control. The soft setting allows a softer power and, of course, the hard setting delivers the top power.

The bike comes with a programming cable which can be used with any PC laptop to hook up to the bike. This allows you to download regular updates in set-up and tuning from the Aprilia website and transfer the setting for test on your bike. Titanium is used in the exhaust system and valves and magnesium covers and aluminium silicon alloy crankcases help keep the poundage down. The motor is kickstart only and the oil tank is integrated inside the crankcases with separate lubrication for engine and gearbox to allow optimum oil efficiency.



The perimeter frame has been designed for MX and is made to work with the engine, in effect making the engine part of the frame structure to provide rigidity and therefore sharp handling. The frame is constructed from tubular steel trellis which is interference fitted to pressed aluminium side plates to form a single structure.

The rear suspension is worked through a rising rate linkage and a Sachs shock as well as a 'normal' swingarm. The front forks are Marzocchi 50mm units and the braking is taken care of via Nissin floating calipers and wavy 270mm/240mm discs. The seat incorporates a small step for rider positioning and the bars are adjustable in the clamping positions for a more forward, rear or central position.

This is not a bike to jump on and take to within minutes. Don't get me wrong, you can still go fast on the Aprilia straight away but you need to spend a little time getting accustomed to its characteristics. The ride is balanced across the chassis as long as the handlebars are not too far forward. If they are set forward steering becomes difficult and arm fatigue is instant. This is in part due to the suspension being a fraction on the stiff side. The units work really well together, it's just a matter of the forks and shock being too hard for all but the fastest.

The Malpensa GP track was an excellent venue for the test as it takes the bike through its paces and allows a rider to feel every part as it operates. The suspension was too hard but the motor still allowed for good traction on the sometimes slippery track. The first motor configuration tested was the big bang and I personally liked the way this developed power. The bike would not rev out but on the watered circuit it worked well in the soft power setting and even better in the hard power setting. The motor was docile enough to allow for good traction and with the hard setting it would rev a little harder to make the steep uphills a pleasure.

The screamer set-up was next and this thing was a blast. It was a little more 'normal' in as much as it felt like most other 450s out there with a certain amount of the 'holy s\*\*\*!' factor. This configuration is great to ride but the fatigue will set in faster with the increased power output. The uphill speed is instantly noticeable in this setting and uphill jumps were easier with the increased speed. Traction was brought back to throttle control and this always brings a smile (or grimace) depending whether you get the corner correct and drift it out or – as happens quite often – get spat off!

The bike is balanced in the air and feels stable at speed. The brakes work very well and if anything the rear brake lacks a little feel as it's super-sharp and will cause stalling if you're not careful. This was one of my only negatives on what is a great overall package. The bike is much too easy to stall and when it does pop to a stop the electronics have to re-set before you can get going which could drive a rider nuts.

Overall the bike is ready to race with just the usual personalisation for each individual rider and for those people requiring a break from the norm and a step into innovation the Aprilia MXV450 may well be the way to go.

*It may look on the far side of radical but give the MXV the benefit of the doubt and actually ride the thing*



## SPECIFICATIONS

**MXV450 >>>**

**Capacity:** 449cc

**Bore and stroke:** 76mm x 49.5mm

**Transmission:** Four-speed

**Front suspension:** Marzocchi USD 50mm

**Rear suspension:** Sachs

**Front brake:** 270mm disc

**Rear brake:** 240mm disc

**Seat height:** 960mm

**Wheelbase:** 1499mm

## HELMETS JUNIOR

VCAN/RXS8	£35.00
KBC Focus	£47.00
THH TX22	£50.00
V1 Race	£80.00

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Shift Assault	£20.00
Troylee designs SE/GP	P.O.A

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Troylee designs GP	P.O.A

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After the disappointment of the '08 RXVs the 2009 models really shine



## WOODS WEAPONS!

ALL CHANGE FOR '09 AS RXVS STEP IT UP

With the Aprilia world enduro race team developing the bikes over the past seasons it was time for a big improvement in the models. The '08 bikes we tested were heavy in ride and looks. For the '09 450 and 550 RXVs the designers have put a vastly improved package together, addressing most of the previous production bike problems including a massive two kilo weight loss!

These bikes are being used in world enduro and are now also becoming a force in desert rallying showing 100 per cent reliability in some recent events. The bikes are finding their feet in the off-road world and I find it very refreshing that Aprilia as well as other European manufacturers are pushing heavily into the enduro/trail markets while the Japanese manufacturers get left behind...

The single overhead cam, fully road homologated V-twin motor is refined for '09 and the chassis has been made lighter. The bulky rad area is still there but it is more acceptable as the bikes look and feel lighter for '09. One of the most noticeable changes to the new models is the replacing of the hideous and massive rear swingarm for a more conventional and simple unit. I believe this makes a massive difference in the overall look and ride of the bike as the previous swingarm cannot have had any flex at all. The motor fires up easily with its electric start and all the controls are of the same quality as the MXV. The suspension is taken care of with a Sachs rear shock and 45mm Marzocchi forks.

Both bikes are instantly better in every department from the '08 model. It really is that simple. The improvements are superb and the lightening of the chassis has made a massive difference to the ride. The bikes pull with a lot of tractability and there is very little to choose between the two models. I personally think the 450 is more fun to ride as it can be ridden to its absolute maximum and that's always good fun. The 550 excelled on the grassy special test as its traction with the power setting switched to soft was awesome. These models obviously run a lower compression than the MXV and the fuel injection system seems to work better for '09 as they do not stall easily and this helped in the tighter, more technical going.

The handling of both bikes is safe and stable and the bikes were awesome fun to ride on the slick parts of the Malpensa MX track. The digital instrumentation provides the rider with opportunity to time and keep track of speeds and distance and the lights are pretty powerful. The timecard holder on the seat cover is always a nice touch and it shows Aprilia's commitment to the racer.

Overall I would have to say that Aprilia have really stepped up with both bikes for '09 and the difference from the previous models is amazing.

## SPECIFICATIONS

### RXV450 >>>

**Capacity:** 449cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 76mm x 49.5mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Front suspension:** Marzocchi USD 45mm  
**Rear suspension:** Sachs  
**Front brake:** 270mm disc  
**Rear brake:** 240mm disc  
**Seat height:** 941mm  
**Wheelbase:** 1495mm

### RXV550 >>>

**Capacity:** 549cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 80mm x 55mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Front suspension:** Marzocchi USD 45mm  
**Rear suspension:** Sachs  
**Front brake:** 270mm disc  
**Rear brake:** 240mm disc  
**Seat height:** 941mm  
**Wheelbase:** 1495mm





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*Danny Veale may be knocking  
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# FREE N EASY!

MAMMOTH LEAPS OVER HUGE SAND DUNES IN THE SUN-BAKED CALIFORNIA DESERT AND DOUBLE BACK-FLIPS IN THE X-GAMES ARE A MILLION MILES AWAY FROM FREESTYLE IN THE UK – BUT THE SPIRIT REMAINS THE SAME AND THE BRITISH FMX SCENE IS ALIVE, WELL AND SEEMS TO BE RELISHING ITS UNDERGROUND IMAGE...

Words and photos by **Adam Duckworth**

**Joe Stephens is forging  
a career in America**

## << YOU CAN STILL BE ONE OF THE BEST IN YOUR 30s

Danny Veale is one of Britain's best-known freestyle riders and at the age of 33 he's right at the top of his game. Unlike motocross where at the top level it's all about total fitness, FMX doesn't put the same sort of strains on the body with sessions being much more laid-back and shorter. Unless you crash hard, of course.

Veale, a part-time decorator from Rochester in Kent, started FMX around eight years ago. He'd been a successful racer but quit through injury. "I then pretty much did the whole pub thing for a couple of years. I got bored of that, started riding BMX then got a MX bike again and just messed about on it down the local quarry with a few mates."

The rest is history as he started to hit the ramps hard, developing a style that's smooth and spectacular. He now rides shows all over the world and has backing from Relentless, Fox, DEP and Rock Oil. As well as year-round demos he competes in the bigger UK contests and rides most weekends when he's not performing in front of big crowds.

"Actually I still love riding on motocross tracks, too. But I love FMX. It's chilled out!"

## YOU CAN SEE THE WORLD AND MAKE A CAREER FROM RIDING MX BIKES >>

Joe Stephens may be only 21 but has been riding motocross for 16 years. He started at club-level schoolboy and even finished second on a big-wheel 85cc at the 2000 Birmingham NEC SX. At the start of 2007 he raced the British four-stroke series and qualified and nearly scored points at his first Maxxis British MX championship race. But after trying freestyle he knew it's where his heart lay.

"Although racing is fun I had always rode a little freestyle motocross and I even bought my own FMX ramp around four years ago. I put FMX to the back of mind while racing. But it was always what I loved to do and midway through last year Rob Scarry offered me some land to use my ramp on and he built me a landing ramp to jump to.

"Once I started jumping more frequently I knew it was what I wanted to do and I switched my focus from racing to freestyle motocross. I rode all of last summer practising FMX as much as I could and in December I headed to Atlanta in the USA to ride and train with the FMX East team during the winter months."

He travelled around on the IFMA tour and got to know many of the riders on the East Coast of America. He spent most of the summer back in America riding demos and is headed back to the USA again this winter.

"I really enjoy the atmosphere at the events in the USA, the crowd get really into the riding and I find being from a different country the riders and fans alike are really hospitable towards you. If I can get to the point where FMX pays the bills then I will be happy, I just want to enjoy riding my bike for as long as I can, travel and have not missed out on anything when it's all done with."

• Check out Joe's blog at [www.dirtbikerider.co.uk](http://www.dirtbikerider.co.uk)

**Ryan Pasch busts out a Hart Attack**



## YOUR BIKE DOESN'T GET WORN OUT IN WEEKLY RACES >>

Ryan Pasch rides hard and rides spectacularly. The 23-year-old from Leicester rides for the UKFMX squad all over the country and practices often at his own compound as well as riding at places like the East Coast's track in Surrey.

But like all the other FMX riders, he doesn't need a new bike every year. FMX is ruled by cheap-to-buy and easy-to-maintain 250 two-strokes. Unlike four-strokes, they make the instant power you need to blast up a ramp and don't have huge amounts of engine braking which can make them handle oddly in the air.

The majority of mods include a cut down seat and the air box cut so you have somewhere to grab. Fat bars are a popular choice, as well as beefier footpegs and stiffer suspension. Plus wheels that have spokes laced slightly looser than on an MX bike for a bit more give on impacts. And it's not like you're having to spend a fortune on new tyres every week and expensive engine mods to squeeze an extra bhp from your over-revving 250F. But crashing can take its toll on your bike – and body...

"It is an intense sport and we do have to train hard to get where we are at, sometimes even bleed for the outcome. Especially when you get a landing wrong. But the pure rush you get when you ride, nothing in the world compares to the feeling of learning a new trick, jumping a new jump or just having an ace session with your pals."



**Three Amigos! Joe, Grant Martin and Steve Price**

## YOU CAN BE A HERO WITHOUT BEING THE BEST RIDER – OR RIDING MUCH AT ALL, ACTUALLY >>

If you think finding a local motocross track can be tough, try to search out somewhere with ramps to have a go at freestyle. Not many of those places advertise in the back of T+MX. It's a smaller sport, there's a risk of injuries and liability claims and there's the perception of badass hoodies who just want to drink beer and flick two fingers at the man. The sort of riders who still have significant animosity towards their parents.

So if you step up to the mark and build a pukka freestyle compound you're a total hero. Steve Price is one of those men.

Price, who slings a leg over a Yamaha YZ250, prefers to spend his time building one of the UK's best FMX compounds. It's on an army base in Kent so don't even think about trying to sneak in.

"I started the track three years ago as a full-on supercross track, then last year I decided to go FMX, hooked up with legend Danny Veale and started to build the most technical track in the UK. We had the field of dreams attitude – build it and they will come. They did and so it started. The track got more and more technical, making it not a nice place to learn how to ride but more of a Mecca for hardcore FMX riders.

"From here, we plan to make everything bigger. Ramps out to more than 75 feet, massive dirt hits, more tech dirt jumps. Enjoy the scene and see where it goes."



## 5

### IT'S BRINGING IN NEW BLOOD >>

A few months ago Liam Gaskell had never ridden a motocross bike. Any motorbike, in fact. But to watch him fly higher and further than most hardcore racers will ever dream of and pull off moves straight from the X-Games is testament to how FMX can bring in new blood to dirt biking.

Gaskell is an ex-BMX ramp rider who is used to flying high, taking risks and pulling off some awesome moves. So when he wanted to go higher and faster than his BMX bike would take him the 19-year-old splashed out on a Kawasaki KXF250 and headed straight for a freestyle compound. He was soon hitting the biggest ramps, even though most riders knew his four-stroke wasn't the best bike for the job – especially for a beginner. "But I didn't know any different."

Gaskell, who is in the army, has been bitten by the dirt bike bug and now plans to take up racing for his regiment. "I just love riding on the dirt."



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## IT FITS IN PERFECTLY WITH AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE >>

Just take one look at 20-year-old Grant Martin and you can tell he's no nine-to-five wage slave. He's a tattoo artist who lives for his minibike, BMX and, of course, his CR250. He's the sort of non-conformist that's drawn to the laid-back, non-competitive fun of whipping it big in front of his mates.

"I've been riding motocross from about four years old with my dad and brothers and been racing on and off since I was 16. In the last five years I've had some pretty bad injuries so never really had much chance to properly get going with the racing thing. This year has been cool though as I won the SMX 250 two-stroke championship. And I will continue to race next year too."

But he's spending more and more time freestyling. "Having Danny Veale as a friend is awesome as I have learned so much from riding with him. It also gave me the opportunity to ride ramps and basically just have fun on my bike away from the bulls\*\*t of racing and going to practice tracks."

Next season Martin will be doing demos as part of East Coast FMX squad. "But my main aim is to just have fun riding and chilling with my friends and just push myself to my own goals!"



## FIVE MINUTES WITH...

PHILL BLOOMFIELD >>

AGE: 27

LIVES: Ipswich, Suffolk

JOB: Sign writer and boss of the East Coast FMX team

**RIDES:** "A 2006 Yamaha YZ250. I used to have a CR250 but went Yamaha last year after riding one of the other guy's bikes. The power is a lot smoother and it flies loads better! The only bad point is that you have to have the subframe adapted for tricks unlike a Honda."

"I have a CRF50 mini bike and a BMX although I don't get much time to ride them anymore. We are lucky to have some heavy plant at our riding place so I like building new lines. I'm also busy starting up a clothing line where we will be selling hoods and tees to pretty much keep the diggers running!"

**RIDING SPOT:** "The ECFMX compound near Croydon where we have all our ramps, a nice big dirt landing, some big uphill dirt to dirt sets, some super-tech hip lines and an old school Crusty Demons-style vert fly out. We also have the portable landing that we use for shows and demos and we have also just built a small foam pit to mess about in over the winter."

"The whole team all travel down every weekend and camp there. Beers and a BBQ on Saturday nights and hang out with the others. We sleep in our vans, then come home ready for work on the Monday to earn my travel money for the next weekend."

**FMX INTRO:** "I saw Crusty 2 when I was a nibbler and from that day I knew it's what I wanted to do. At that time I was racing the local club championship races and doing okay but it wasn't what I wanted to be doing. I got into a bit of trouble for fighting with other riders. There were just too many rules to follow and if you didn't follow them you were in trouble."

"When I was old enough to earn a wage a few of my mates and myself built a ramp in Suffolk. I then turned away from racing and just spent as much time as I could hitting the ramp. It's not as easy to start doing FMX as racing is in this country. As long as you are lucky enough to afford a bike there are race clubs and practice tracks all over the country so it's easy to find a place to ride."

"But to do FMX it's loads harder to start. You need a friend who can fabricate metal, ramp plans, a dirt landing and a very understanding farmer who's willing to rent you a bit of land. That's the main hurdle, finding land."

"When I lost my original place to ride in Suffolk I spent nearly a whole year with nowhere to ride ramps, making do with riding motocross practice tracks. I bumped into Chris Birch a few years ago and explained the trouble I was having so he introduced me to the other guys in the UK and it led to where I am today."



# SMOKIN' AND STROKIN'!

IT'S BEEN A STELLAR YEAR FOR TWO-STROKE PILOTS AS THE DEP SERIES CONTINUES TO ATTRACT GROWING ENTRIES WITH ITS MIX OF CRACKING RACING, TOP TRACKS AND GREAT ATMOSPHERE...

Words by **Pondo** Photos by **Pondo** and **Ian Roxburgh**

**T**here have been highs and the very lowest of tragic lows since Chris and Karen Barker put their lives on hold to kick off the whole DEP Pipes two-stroke championship thing – but unlike with the stockmarket 2008 saw another increase in the share value of stoker racing.

David Willett had a stellar first year in 2007 but the defence of his crown proved far more problematic. The big issue was the introduction of Jonathan Pettitt and Jack Brunnell for the full season – both quickly showed they were able to offer a serious challenge to the Dover man's attempts to regain his crown. TM-mounted Pettitt was there or thereabouts out of the gate in almost every race and had pace in hand to just get his head down and push through the field to the front to win every round outright or tie on points, wildcards discarded.

Even JP has feet of clay, however, as he showed with crashes and poor starts at Blaxhall and Mildenhall. But the bonus was finally getting to see Pettitt unleashed. With no more efficient marking of the laps, Pettitt on a charge was a beast unleashed – wild and edgy and well worth the admission fee! In contrast Willett was silky-smooth but a seeming lack of power from his stock-looking Yamaha cost him out of the gate – able to carve his way towards the front of the field, by the time he got there Pettitt and Brunnell were more often than not long gone. From time to time – with a decent start and out of sheer frustration – he would straight-up beat Pettitt but there's no doubt that the crown passed to the better man this year.

Pettitt would take consistent overalls all year long despite his occasional slip ups but while a JP slip up meant a charge through the pack to third or fourth, both Willett and Brunnell suffered catastrophic DNFs. Willett's mechanical at Landrake left him with a points deficit to both Pettitt and Brunnell but at the time it looked like it would just make it hard for him to challenge for the title.

However, it became apparent early on that Willett was going to struggle to take even the number two spot as Brunnell had a run of form that saw him regularly holeshot and try and escape before Pettitt could fight back. It was a trick he never quite managed but with three rounds left he held a cushion over Willett. Then an eventful second moto at Blaxhall left the battle-scarred youngster stranded trackside and his DNF saw the pair of them tied on points heading into Mildenhall.

Willett took a narrow advantage heading into the finale at Marshfield and made sure of second when moto three saw Brunnell's Yamaha suck a banner into the back wheel, winding itself tight and locking the wheel within

>>



**Matt Moffat leads  
Open Expert champ  
Mark Eastwood**



**David Willett and Chris Fitch –  
Chris' son Richard lost his life  
racing at Hawkstone while leading  
the series in '05 and without his  
support the series would have  
ended there and then**

dep wrap

*Jim Davies finishes the season fourth in the 125cc Expert division*





**Two-smoke champions!**



**David Willett was second best Open Expert and #1 125cc Expert at the start of the season**

**The Experts get out the gate at Landrake**



half-a-lap. Despite frantic attempts there was no way to drag the banner out and that was game-over on the spot. So Willett deservedly took second place in the series but that's not to say that Brunnel wouldn't equally have deserved it – as is often the case it's all a matter of how the cards fall...

Jim Davies took a comfortable fourth overall in the series, just lacking consistent starts and that sharp edge of pace to regularly run with the top three. It took until the last moto of the series for him to give them a scare but he caught and followed Willett at close quarters on his TM.

The battle for fifth was close all year long with Paul Shires, Brett Wheeler and 2007 Junior champion Adam Reynolds barely 30 points apart after over nine hours of racing and it was Reynolds who came out on top despite a heroic final round from Wheeler that saw him gain 20 points at Marshfield. But Reynolds deserves the #5 plate – the 125mx.com KTM pilot raced Wakes just three weeks after breaking his wrist as a points-saving exercise.

Former British 125 champion Greg Hanson started out the series with some great rides before deciding to knock it on the head after round four to concentrate on his challenge for the FIM veteran's world title and there were a number of bonus wildcard entries – Jason Dougan, Tom Church and John May all turned out for various rounds and none of them had it all their own way. TC would edge victory after an enthralling last moto duel with Pettitt at his home track at Marshfield but a pushover it was not.

The Junior championship came down to Christian Taylor and Lloyd Morgan – the two battled all year long, both getting great starts and running right at the sharp end of the field (both led races overall this year) but as ever it came down to who made the least mistakes. Taylor took the honours at a snow-hit Canada Heights opener as Morgan struggled to a lowly 15th and Morgan also DNF'd a race at Pontrilas after a mid-air collision with Craig English. But over the course of the season the young Welshman kept nibbling at Taylor's lead.

The pair went to the final round separated by 24 points but Motoshack rider Taylor, showing no sign of the pressure, came out and swept to three imperious Junior moto wins to seal the title. Morgan was well-placed in case of a mistake but the Turbo wouldn't put a wheel wrong and took a deserved crown.

Jack Plowman was a solid third in the title chase after missing round one but leapt straight onto the podium at Landrake. From there on he was able to get among Taylor and Morgan for the rest of the season, snatching a win at Blaxhall and – like Morgan – there to hop a place or two in the championship if anyone above him stumbled. Bradley Howlett took fourth, his season getting off to a flyer with a brilliant second place at Canada Heights, with Oli Rusby taking the #5 plate at the end of the year despite missing out on the finale at Marshfield.

For the Open championship there were only two contenders right from the get-go – reigning champion Mark Eastwood and 2007 number two Dave Willett. The pair were neck and neck all



year long but two crucial events were to tip the scales – both of them in favour of Easty. The first was a DNF for Willett on the last lap of moto one at Landrake while lying second and the second was his rear suspension failure at the start of the final moto at Mildenhall.

Other than that there was little to choose between them – both gated solidly all season but Eastwood had the edge on pure pace, always capable of pulling that little bit extra out of the bag when the chips were down and six straight moto wins to round the season off were the icing on the cake for the British MXdN team manager.

Behind them Andre David looked a shoo-in to take the #3 plate until a nasty crash in practice at Wakes Colne left the Motorvation rider with a dislocated elbow. Somehow he was back racing just a fortnight later at Blaxhall but the zero score at Wakes and an understandably below-par score in the super-rough Blaxhall sand a fortnight later dropped him down the order to fifth.

Instead Dale Raynor and Alistair Clark took the battle for third down to the wire. The pair were neck and neck all year long but Clark struggled in the soft stuff and conceded a devastating 60 points over Blaxhall and Mildenhall, lifting Raynor into a third place he would comfortably maintain at Marshfield.

And an honourable mention goes to Matthew Moffat. The KTM rider turned up for just three rounds but took a brace of podiums to launch himself into 14th in the championship and give Easty and Willett fits at Leisure Lakes in the process. Moffat took a moto win there – the only rider other than Eastwood, Willett and Whitby wildcards Carl Nunn and James Noble to see an Open class chequered flag first. Not bad company to frequent...

Dave Dibble and Nathan Rooks were the chief combatants for the Open Junior title – both missed the start of the campaign but Dibble missed just one round to Rooks' two which proved pivotal in the final summary. The pair were evenly matched all summer long but Dibble's three-moto sweep at Landrake gave him a comfortable cushion to defend through to the finish. Rooks would take five overalls – emphatically including the last four on the bounce – but Dibble was always in the mix, knocking out triple digit scores for fun which was more than enough to seal the title.

Ashley Pennycook took a deserved third, scoring good points at every round to withstand a second half charge from Justin Penty with Darren Marklove giving the pair of them something to think about in fifth.

For fans of the sport in general and two-strokes in particular it was a great series with some incredible racing from some of the best talent in the country down to the keenest of amateur racers. But it all ended on (quite literally) a damp note with the planned double-header at Marshfield being cut down to a single day Saturday event when atrocious conditions overnight left the hillside track in no condition to be raced upon. It was a shame but it was also the braver and, more importantly, right decision to make...

David 'Officer' Dibble ends the year on top in the Open Juniors





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## HISTORY LESSON

### A DRUNKEN DREAM...

The DEP Pipes two-stroke series was the brainchild of Chris Barker. "I had the idea over a drunken night at the local," he explains. "I knew that if I had the best circuits the riders would come. I sent out a prospectus on what I was doing and the first reply was Craig Elwell from DEP Pipes!" And so the 2005 DEP Pipes 125 Challenge was born.

There were plenty of ups and downs and Chris and his wife Karen committed huge amounts of time and money to the series, although he managed to get help with prizes from companies in the sport. In return, they got press releases, newsletters and race reports so they could see what was going on.

Then tragedy struck. In July '05 series leader Richard Fitch was killed in an accident at Hawkstone Park – Chris and Richard were good friends and his loss hit hard. "I actually threw the towel in when Richard was taken from us. It was his dad Chris who convinced me to carry it on, I sponsored Rich when he was a kid and we go back a way."

In his honour, Richard's name was placed at the head of the championship at the end of the year and his name will always be associated with the series as their first-ever champion.

But after the nightmare of Hawkstone things just grew. From humble beginnings as a single 125-only class at ACU meetings within two years the series was running dedicated meetings under Matt Bates' MC Federation banner with three groups of 125s plus two for 250s and 500s with backing from Red Bull. And as much as the series caters for the clubman who wants to race two-strokes on a level playing field, it has also attracted former and current GP racers like Warren Edwards, Brian Jorgensen and Brad Anderson.

None of them are there for a vast purse – it's because riding two-strokes is just a plain blast. The fact that the paddock hosts a genuine carnival atmosphere where everyone is willing to pitch in, help out and share a beer – well that's just a bonus.



Jon Pettitt is the class act of the 125cc Experts

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### 125cc EXPERT >>

1	Jonathan Pettitt	1101 points
2	Dave Willett	987
3	Jack Brunnel	936
4	Jim Davies	849
5	Adam Reynolds	650
6	Brett Wheeler	643
7	Paul Shires	620
8	Sean Stevens	509
9	James Kensington	500
10	Luke Kennet	496

### 125cc JUNIOR >>

1	Christian Taylor	1006 points
2	Lloyd Morgan	973
3	Jack Plowman	890
4	Bradley Howlett	754
5	Oliver Rusby	652
6	Ady Peedle	535
7	Lee Holland	465
8	Jasper Uphill	461
9	Steve Gesner	447
10	Matthew Thomas	408

### OPEN EXPERT >>

1	Mark Eastwood	1050 points
2	Dave Willett	939
3	Dale Raynor	655
4	Alistair Clark	639
5	Andre David	581
6	Mike Kock	575
7	Justin Robinson	533
8	Michael Hand	480
9	Steve Martin	446
10	Jason Palmer	439

### OPEN JUNIOR >>

1	David Dibble	948 points
2	Nathan Rooks	882
3	Ashley Pennycook	780
4	Justin Penty	765
5	Darren Marklove	738
6	Dan Grove	613
7	Scott Senter	461
8	Jonathan Tapp	437
9	Lee Thornton	420
10	Ben Anstie	415

*After three hours battling at Weston who wouldn't feel the need for a visit to Madam Butterfly's massage parlour?*





B L A Z I N G  
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A FEW MONTHS EARLIER IT WAS THE PIER IN FLAMES BUT THIS TIME IT'S THE TURN OF STEFAN EVERTS TO SET THE WESTON SEAFRONT ALIGHT!

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

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*First corner chaos about to unfold as Knighter grabs the holeshot from Jamie Lewis (#7) and James Lassu (#13)*

*Shane Carless fires the PAR Homes Honda into one of Weston's new whoops sections*



*Maximum effort from Tom Church*



*The queue for the first dune*

**T**he entry list for the 26th running of the Weston Beach Race reads like a who's who of the motocross and enduro world. This year sees Shaun Simpson, Tom Church, Marc De Reuver, Tyla Rattray, Josh Coppins, Brad Anderson, Paul Edmondson and pre-race favourites David Knight and Stefan Everts among the 1000-strong field as they take on the monster dunes and sand whoops created on the Weston seafront.

While the big names are undoubtedly a major spectator draw, it's the other 980 riders that make the event what it is – anyone who disagrees obviously hasn't stood and watched as 1000 bikes take off down the start straight in a thunderous mix of water, sand and smoke. And as well as providing great racing, the big names also do their bit to pull in entries – where else can Joe Clubman line up and race a current world champion?

With Mother Nature supplying weather that wouldn't be out of place in August, a huge crowd turn out to watch as Manxman David Knight is first into turn one at the end of the mile-long straight. With Everts and Coppins neck and neck for second and a 250F-mounted Simpson through in the top 10 the stage is set. With the first 20 riders through, the traditional chaos that is the first dune ensues with the track

resembling the parc ferme almost immediately. While the not-so-gifted struggle with the dunes, Simpson moves through and tries to put a pass on new boss Everts before crashing down the backside of a fresh dune. Both Coppins and Everts get past Knight and as they head down the straight for the second time it's Coppins leading Everts, Knight and Simpson. In previous years one of the biggest challenges for the front runners has been negotiating the riders still stuck on the first dune but this year the marshals already have it cleared leaving the door open for some great racing.

The first half-dozen laps see Everts, Knight, Coppins and Simpson switching positions between themselves as each make mistakes. Behind them De Reuver and Rattray are finding it hard going while '05 winner Paul Edmondson crashes into an unfortunate marshal, putting him back down the field and ending the marshal's day.

Knighter manages to make a break and pulls a 25-second lead before a 'Knightmare' (boom, tish, I thank you!) first pit stop sees the Katoom refuse to start for a full minute, leaving Knight to fight his way back before a big crash in the whoops – while trying to pass Coppins – drops him back once again.

At the two-hour mark Knight manages to make his way back up to Everts but bike problems see

&gt;&gt;

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Shaun Simpson storms to  
second at his first attempt



One lump or two?



## THE NEWBIE

SHAUN SIMPSON >>

With the '08 British MX2 title to his name, a stellar performance in the GPs and a move to the Factory KTM squad for next season, things are looking bright for young Shaun Simpson whose dad Willie was the winner of the first ever Weston.

"Basically I've always wanted to do it," explains Shaun on the morning of his Weston debut. "It's always been a case of circumstances – one year I couldn't get a bike, another year we were away on holiday or something. To be honest I wasn't going to be doing it this year either, purely because we didn't have bikes ready and it was really short notice. KTM told us that they wanted a presence here but only the truck because obviously Stefan and Tyla were going to ride so I thought if the truck's going anyway I might as well go and ride."

"So I quickly got my race bike ready and here I am really looking forward to it. I've never actually been here when the race is on but after watching the quads on Saturday I'm really excited about it. I think it's just something you've got to get on with and have fun with. I mean you have to take it serious but not too serious – if you lose 10 seconds in a corner you don't need to be kicking yourself about it, it's a long race."

"I don't go into anything without wanting to win it. I'm going to be going for the win but top 10 would be a realistic goal, top five would be real good."

To take the top slot would mean beating his new boss and we all know that's not a good idea!

"I wouldn't take him out but then I wouldn't let him win either, I'll definitely try to beat him – maybe a block pass!"

*Marc De Reuver's one of the pre-race favourites but he can't stick the pace*



*Machine gun nests prove tricky to negotiate*



*Josh Coppins leads early on but crashes cost him dear*



the GNCC champ losing ground again before the KTM finally blows up with only 40 minutes remaining. Coppins is also having problems – having opted for a one-stop strategy he rides the first hour-and-a-half without a drink leaving himself seriously dehydrated. After a couple of big offs, which bend the bike a little, he decides to play it safe and retires at the two-and-a-half hour mark.

While some of the front runners are having problems the Brits are stepping it up with Jamie Lewis, Ashley Greedy, Tom Church and Paul Edmondson all passing Rattray and De Reuver to fill the top eight while Simpson is riding a blinder to sit in second behind Everts.

With the pressure of Knight and Coppins gone and a two-minute cushion over second, Everts seems to be enjoying himself, jumping through the whoops like he's only just got on the bike and passing others like they're standing still (okay, some are). Watching him you'd be mad to bet against him still being able to win a GP...

As the clock ticks down to zero the prospect of another lap is too much for most and a huge crowd of riders gather before the finish line waiting for the 'King' to complete his 18th and final lap and lead them over the line for his second Weston victory. Behind him Shaun Simpson comes home in a magnificent second with PAR Homes Honda's Jamie Lewis a hard-fought third with only the podium men completing 18 laps.



# THE FORMER CHAMP

DAVID KNIGHT >>

With this year's AMA GNCC title already safely tucked under his belt Knighter is clear to race Weston. In preparation for his assault on the solo race David decides to take it easy and rides in the quad race on the Saturday, finishing fourth in an event he won back in '02.

"To be honest I'm a bit stiff after yesterday's race," says DK on Sunday morning. "The bike stopped on the last lap but that's the way it goes. I still managed to have a bit of fun. It should be all right today, hopefully I'll loosen up after a few laps! I'm just looking to enjoy it today really, I mean I've taken this race seriously before and it doesn't work, you know?"

"Like yesterday when the bike stopped on the last lap, anything can happen – you just never know. It was like when I beat Stefan a couple of years ago, his bike packed up on the last lap. If I finish here then I've won, if I haven't then I've DNF'd."

The last time Knighter rode Weston the weather was appalling but this year it's a different story with glorious sun beating down and some different obstacles thrown in courtesy of GP track builder Justin Barclay.

"It'll be harder for me today," admits David. "The track's nothing really – last time it was wet, mucky and big ruts and stuff which probably helped me a lot. I think everyone will be a lot closer today – it's fast, a bit more motocross. I've just got to keep plodding on and try to save myself for the last bit. A good start will be important but it's the second lap where you can either make or lose time. Sometimes it can be better not to be right at the front, maybe inside the top 15-20, as they have been known to open the gates up around the dunes if they get too packed."

So does he feel any pressure going into the race? "I just want to have some fun, the most important thing is to just finish the race but if it goes tits up then so be it!"



weston

Everts chases Coppins...



## THE KING

STEFAN EVERTS >>

Having won in '04 and been beaten by David Knight in '06, retired 10-time world champ Stefan Everts comes into the race as one of the crowd favourites. And he certainly doesn't disappoint his fans, holding off Knight and Coppins before finally beating Simpson into second place by over two minutes.

"It was hard work you know," explains Stefan. "I feel my condition is not what it needs to be and after one hour I was thinking 'man there is still a long way to go!' But saying that I was well prepared today, I have a little experience here now, how to handle and take care of your food and drink."

"Things went good today. I didn't have so many crashes, just two – one on the first lap when I put it in neutral and went down and one when I tangled with some other guys. Other than that I had a good day. I was a little scared with the bike along the straight because you know it's revving a lot and I didn't want to seize it, I also wanted to try and save some fuel. Off the start I wasn't so good but once we got to the dunes I immediately found a good line and managed to pass everybody there."

"You know when David's bike broke down I was pulling away so I've been told and the last time [they met] I ran out of fuel so it was like the same thing. Before this race I knew that he was the guy to beat so it is now 1-1!"

As far as the track suiting motocross riders over enduro riders Stefan disagrees.

"They made those whoops everywhere this time which made the track quite difficult. The first time I raced here the track got really bad during the race but today was not that bad. I wouldn't say it was more suited to motocross because you have all the slow riders and this is the big obstacle, you are constantly having to change your lines and sometimes you will touch – one time today I ran a guy over on the backside of a jump!"

So with win number two in the bag it's a good job well done but something that's going to be with him for a few days to come.

"I'm very happy but my arms and hands are not so strong as they were and I have some pain in my lower back, I think I am going to have some souvenirs from Weston for a while!"



...and Knight chases Everts



Knighter kills his KTM!



# SHOW TIME!

THE BRITISH SUPERCROSS SEASON STARTS SPECTACULARLY IN SHEFFIELD  
AND LIKE NORMAL IT'S THE NORTH AMERICANS WHO LEAD THE WAY...

Words and photos by Sully

sheffield sx

*Tommy Searle takes  
victory in the British Open  
class but he can't stay  
with Mike Brown on SX2*



sheffield sx

*Privateer Heath Voss is looking good for victory in the SX1 Main Event until a crash drops him to second*



**B**elieve it or not one of the first supercross races ever held was to celebrate the defeat of Nazi Germany. On May 9 1956 in Prague's Strahov stadium a few 100,000 excited fans witnessed the birth of stadium dirt racing at an event that was part of the nation's Great Victory Day celebrations.

Despite the immense popularity of early races like this – there were also stadium motocross events throughout the rest of Europe during this period although details are few and far between and relatively sketchy – it wasn't until the Yanks got a hold of the concept in the early '70s that supercross as a sport really took off.

A decade or so later after being a mostly American affair the sport started to return to Europe with many an exhibition hall hosting wooden board races before people figured racing dirt bikes on wood wasn't really the one and switched-on promoters started bringing in dirt to build the technical circuits instead.

In Britain supercross emerged in 1983 with races held at the Stoke and Weymouth speedway stadiums, then in '84 the sport went big with a wooden board race in the NEC followed by a full on international – The World Masters – at Stamford Bridge. Even though rain ruined the event that was held on Chelsea FC's hallowed turf over 11,000 fans still turned out to see Georges Jobe and Aussie Stephen Gall do the business in the deep black mire.

With no major events held here in '85 it was Manchester's Belle Vue stadium that next hosted international SX in the fall of '86. Rob Herring and Jeff Ward traded wins in the Hard Cross event that would be the last major outdoor indoor race ever held in Blighty.

Low key made-for-regional-TV supercross series were hosted by Matchams Park and then Reading speedway stadium for a time in the late '80s before big bucks US-style supercross returned to the NEC with a bang in '89 with the extravagantly titled Supercross World Masters.

Those barmy three nights in Birmingham showed that indoor motocross in the UK could potentially be a success once more as Warren Edwards had the sold-out crowd on the edge of their seats as he battled with American supercross legend Ricky Johnson for Friday night's Main Event victory. Wozza crashed out and RJ stole the win but the buzz surrounding the event ensured British interest in supercross was revived even though the NEC promoters couldn't pull together another event until '92.

The '92 race was another corker as another Yank – Larry Ward – took victory on his Suzuki while Britain's biggest hope Jamie Dobb crushed his nuts when he landed short on the big triple in front of the grandstands (but bravely battled on throughout the weekend with massively swollen gonads). Despite being a highly enjoyable and entertaining weekend of indoor race action – except maybe for Dobber – and the high-flying spectacle of supercross coming across well on BBC TV, the '92 NEC race would be the last event of its kind for five long years.

Perhaps one of the biggest problems with those early events was the attitude of the promoters who came promising the world but quite often made a massive loss and then scarpered which meant that there was never anything to build on and British riders and race fans had nothing they could put any faith in until Future West's Canadian crusader John Hellam stepped up to the plate in 1997.

&gt;&gt;

*Max Anstie is unstoppable in the Youth Lites – good work ginger DBR columnist dude!*



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Neville 'The Beast' Bradshaw gets fifth in the British Open Main Event



## RESULTS

### SX1 >>>

- |   |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Colton Facciotti | (Yamaha – CAN) |
| 2 | Heath Voss       | (Honda – USA)  |
| 3 | Jeff Alessi      | (Honda – USA)  |
| 4 | Mike Brown       | (KTM – USA)    |
| 5 | Tyler Bright     | (Suzuki – USA) |
| 6 | Steven Clarke    | (Suzuki – GB)  |

### SX2 >>>

- |   |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Mike Brown       | (KTM – USA)    |
| 2 | Tommy Searle     | (KTM – GB)     |
| 3 | Kyle Beaton      | (Yamaha – CAN) |
| 4 | Tyler Bright     | (Suzuki – USA) |
| 5 | Carl Nunn        | (Suzuki – GB)  |
| 6 | Neville Bradshaw | (Honda – GB)   |

### BRITISH OPEN >>>

- |   |                  |          |
|---|------------------|----------|
| 1 | Tommy Searle     | (KTM)    |
| 2 | Carl Nunn        | (Suzuki) |
| 3 | Gordon Crockard  | (Honda)  |
| 4 | Martin Barr      | (Suzuki) |
| 5 | Neville Bradshaw | (Honda)  |
| 6 | Scott Elderfield | (Honda)  |

Hellam came in big booking Sheffield Arena in early October and then bringing three big name Americans – Jeremy McGrath, Larry Ward and Damon Bradshaw – to take on the best of the Brits. The locals got well and truly smoked but an awesome three-way battle at the front of the pack between the visiting Yanks – eventually won by Ward – ensured that the almost sold-out crowd toddled off with king size smiles on their chops. And since then crowds of varying sizes have returned to Sheffield every single year for the last 12 making John – and his team – one of the longest lasting and most dependable promoters ever seen in British off-road sport.

The 2008 edition of this long-standing event is the opening round of the officially ACU-sanctioned 2009 British supercross championship that includes a purely British Pro class for the first time in chuffing ages which means that they'll be at least one British professional winner on the night.

That accolade is taken by factory KTM rider Tommy Searle who overcomes silly crashes in the early qualifying

rounds to win the Main Event from behind as Carl Nunn – whose dad Stuart took part in America's first ever supercross at the LA Coliseum in '72 – bolts from the gate and makes a break for it.

Tommy Gun won't let it go though and chases down the veteran Suso Suzuki star who finally relinquishes the lead to the Stateside-bound youngster with just a handful of laps to go. Gordon Crockard ends the race in third on his PAR Homes Honda CRF450 – the only Open class bike inside the top six.

Searle also stands on the podium in the SX2 class final, this time in second behind another factory KTM rider – 36-year-old Mike Brown – who is making his UK supercross debut on the orange bikes. While it's Searle who takes the early lead, Brown methodically works his way through the pack to win yet another Main at Sheffield. Behind the American veteran and the British young gun is Canada's Kyle Beaton who powers his borrowed UTAG Yamaha to third.

The SX1 class is stacked with talent and it's another >>>



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# PRO-ACTION

SUSPENSION AND MOTORS

Sheffield regular Jeff Alessi ends the evening third in SX1



Canadian – this time Colton Facciotti – who takes the win in the evening-ending 15-lap Main Event. Colton kinda flukes it though as Honda privateer Heath Voss crashes out of the lead position mid-race after taking the holeshot and pulling his way clear but is still able to remount – albeit peakless – and finish second ahead of Sheffield SX regular Jeff Alessi who's also Honda-mounted.

Best Brit in the SX1 Main is former 85cc world champ Steven Clarke who finishes sixth on a 250F Relentless Suzuki. Clarke spends most of his time racing the amateur circuit Stateside and looks super comfortable on the tight Sheffield circuit – expect to see a lot more of Scuba Steve in Sheffield and elsewhere in the future.

Another future supercross star in the making is Max Anstie who rides his KTM SX-F250 to easy victory – he laps up to second place – ahead of a very talented pack of Youth Lites class racers. Anstie also runs strong in the head-to-head races beating back the ultra-aggressive Neville Bradshaw in the quarter final stage before being knocked out himself in the semis.

Luke Norris takes victory in the Supermini class ahead of Matt Bayliss, Luke Hawkins and Ben Watson who takes a well-deserved win in the Small Wheel 85cc division. Suzuki's James Dunn takes fifth in Supermini and second in the Small Wheels to make his trip to Sheffield worthwhile.

The 65cc Youth class is won by Alfie Bowtell who shares the podium champagne with Sid Evans and Gradie Featherstone while in the Auto class Jamie Clarke powers his Cobra to the win ahead of Dylan Woodcock and Harry Wichman.

The adult amateur classes are perennially hard-fought affairs and this year's battles are no different. Brad Nixon dominates the Amateur Lites class while former youth SX champion Chad Yarranton takes the Amateur Open win in fine style.

Victory in SX2 goes to Mike Brown



Tyler Bright runs 5-4 in the SX1 and SX2 classes



## RESULTS

### CLUBMAN LITES >>

- 1 Brad Nixon (Honda)
- 2 George Purchase (KTM)
- 3 Ryan Mason (Yamaha)
- 4 Luke Spence (KTM)
- 5 Kris Ayres (Honda)
- 6 Ashley Tate (Suzuki)

### CLUBMAN OPEN >>

- 1 Chad Yarranton (Kawasaki)
- 2 Carl Jones (Honda)
- 3 David Hanby (Honda)
- 4 Ryan Mason (Yamaha)
- 5 Oliver Brunskill (Yamaha)
- 6 Danny Blakely (Yamaha)

### YOUTH LITES >>

- 1 Max Anstie (KTM)
- 2 Christian Taylor (KTM)
- 3 Rowan Hill (Suzuki)
- 4 Nathan Rooks (KTM)
- 5 Ross Clarke (Suzuki)
- 6 Joe Jones (KTM)

### SUPERMINI >>

- 1 Luke Norris (Honda)
- 2 Matt Bayliss (Honda)
- 3 Luke Hawkins (Honda)
- 4 Ben Watson (KTM)
- 5 James Dunn (Suzuki)
- 6 John Hawkins (KTM)

### 85cc >>

- 1 Ben Watson (KTM)
- 2 James Dunn (Suzuki)
- 3 Bradley Ward (Kawasaki)
- 4 Michael Eccles (Kawasaki)
- 5 Max Acres (Suzuki)
- 6 Tom Neale (KTM)

### 65cc >>

- 1 Alfie Bowtell (KTM)
- 2 Sid Evans (KTM)
- 3 Gradie Featherstone (KTM)
- 4 Jamie Carpenter (KTM)
- 5 Connor Hughes (KTM)
- 6 Eddie Remmer (KTM)

### AUTO >>

- 1 Jamie Clarke (Cobra)
- 2 Dylan Woodcock (KTM)
- 3 Harry Wichman (KTM)
- 4 Brandon Sharples (KTM)
- 5 Joe Etches (KTM)
- 6 Albie Wilkie (KTM)



A green and white Kawasaki off-road motorcycle is shown from a side profile. A large, polished wooden gavel is resting on the seat. The background is dark.

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# RAGE

A motocross rider in a yellow and blue suit is performing a wheelie on a muddy track. The rider is wearing a white helmet with a pink visor and a Suzuki logo. The motorcycle is yellow and blue, with a large amount of mud on the tires and engine. The background shows a dirt track with other riders and spectators.

## ELITE SHOWDOWN!

SIZZLING SEND-OFF FOR THE UK'S HOTTEST YOUTH SERIES

## FOUR STARS!

BSMA BOYS CROWNED KINGS AT BROOKTHORPE

LUKE DEAN

Danny Lanfear ends the season second quickest Elite 65cc rider



# ELITE SHOWDOWN!

THE HOTTEST YOUTH SERIES SIGNS OFF WITH SIZZLING ACTION – AND EXCITING NEW PLANS

In another masterstroke of timing, Matt Bates and Craig Elwell rolled out the blueprint for next year's Red Bull-backed Elite Youth Cup at the finale of this year's competition at Canada Heights.

The MC combo arrived on the youth scene with the promise of producing the best youth gig on the calendar – job done guys and tons of respect. In just two years they have gained the maximum acclaim possible from the youth paddock and for their next trick they're planning top-notch pro racing on the same card as the best youth competition around. If they can pull it off it will shake the very foundations of the traditional two-day youth national as we know it.

Hopefully if it all goes as previewed at Canada Heights it'll draw a response from other organisations too. Could we possibly see the ACU U21s for example in Sunday action at BYMX in 2010? And what about the BSMA snuggling up to the Masters to breathe new life into both their youth sections? It's well worth a thought, a cup of coffee and a chat guys.

Anyway, back to the racing and Ben Green and Danny Lanfear put on a super-charged show to carve up the Junior 65cc section with a 3-2 split of race wins favouring the eventual champion Green. Stunning stuff from those two who were ably assisted by Todd Kellett, Alfie Bowtell and Ryan Snaith as they filled the top five places on the weekend.

James Dunn ended his Small Wheel days with another title as he cruised to the opening two moto wins. Ben Watson chipped in for the moto three glory and Adam Sterry got in on the act for the race four win as Dunny went out in real style. As the flag came down on the red plate season he had secured a hat trick of

race wins and national title number two for himself and the Relentless Suzuki crew.

Luke Hawkins and Brad Pocock continued their winning ways and total dominance in the Big Wheels. This has been the story all season and it was no different in Kent. Even with a comfortable title lead Hawkins had the tougher number as he had to secure the crown with all the pressure that goes with that task.

At the end of the day though it was a job done in real style. Three national titles in '08 and life's really sweet right now for the young PAR flier. What a prospect though for '09 as Hawkins, Pocock and Walkley tough it out to be the best. Third place overall for the weekend went to Ryan Houghton in his comeback from injury. The kid's full of promise and next term should see some silverware heading his way.

Turbo Taylor has kept a low profile this season in many ways by not performing on the BYMX stage but the guy is having a terrific time nonetheless and secured the Elite Senior title aboard the two-stroke 125. With a series of electrifying races he has proved he can mix it with the very best of them.

Scott Elderfield – with Sunday pro racing on his mind – wrapped up the Open title on day one with a 2-2-1 scorecard. South African David Goosen ran them all ragged on day two plundering a brace of race wins. It was Matt Moffat, however, with a consistent weekend and a single race win who topped out on the podium steps for the weekend. Josh Waterman just failed to catch Lewis Tombs in the tussle for the series runner-up berth when the Team Green machine decided to take a nap in race three after Josh had pounced to win the opening race from Elderfield.



Good times for Josh Waterman and Brad Pocock



Brad Pocock pushes hard but misses out on BW85cc honours



# FOURSTARS!

## BSMA CHAMPS SEAL TITLES AT BROOKTHORPE

Jack Wilson, Jordan Godwin, Luke Dean and Connor Walkley are the four names that will be etched into the BSMA role of honour as youth champions for 2008 following the climax to the Pirelli Best of British series at Brookthorpe.

For Connor the Saturday was probably the most eventful day in his racing career! It all kicked off with a few jaw-droppingly quick qualifying laps astride the much-anticipated 250F. Then followed a spectacular and truly eye-watering high-altitude bail from the 144 during the opening lap of race one.

The crash left Connor and the Team Green two-stroke machine looking distinctly bent and crumpled. After a worrying few minutes surrounded by paramedics Connor was given a bit more air time as he was shuffled off to hospital in the air ambulance. At this point it all looked a bit gloomy for Connor.

Returning to Brookthorpe, however, to be told with the tail end of a hurricane due any moment Sunday's racing had been cancelled meant things didn't turn out so bad after all. Although a fail on the hospital MOT certificate with a busted collarbone and other bits of sundry bone damage will keep Connor off the bike for a frustrating few weeks.

In Connor's absence Oliver Rusby beat off the attentions of a rapid Harry McKenna to claim the two race wins on the day but, ultimately, not enough points to snatch the championship away from the Kawasaki Kid. Connor had won every race in the series prior to the final round so while it was bad luck for Oliver the sidelined star did deserve the title.

By comparison Connor's buddy and fellow South Wales fighter pilot Jordan Godwin had a much easier day with his Small Wheel 85cc championship already won prior to the event. Being a double national champion just a few casual laps of honour were all that were needed, surely? Well actually it turned into a real dogfight as Charlie Mills, Jack Weaver and Chris Bayliss rained on Jordan's parade all day long in a great little scrap behind another welsh wizard – double race winner on the day Jay Thomas.

Jay flew around the spectacular Gloucestershire circuit in a class of one to secure the overall win and the runner-up berth in the final standings as Jordan and the others fought it out in his wake.

Luke Dean put a massive smile on team manager Paul Butler's face as he tore into his two-race programme with a towering, nerveless display that gained him maximum points along with the series Big Wheel crown for Relentless Suzuki. Working the room in style he showed a clean pair of heels to ACU Academy member Dan Thornhill who always seems to get the business done at Brooky and his main BSMA championship rivals Matt Bayliss and Josh Brine.

Hansen Racing's Jack Wilson was another guy with a big beamer across his face as he collected the Junior 65cc title with an impressive 15 race wins over the series to his credit. On the day Jack kept a sensible points-scoring head on to keep in front of main championship rival Henry Williams as Robert Yates and Danny Lanfear – who were in the race as guest riders – put on a masterclass at the head of the field.

## FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

### JUNIOR 65cc

1	Jack Wilson	1013 points
2	Henry Williams	971
3	Patrick O'Neill	936
4	Daniel Wheeler	879
5	Billy King	829
6	Jamie Carpenter	822

### SW85cc

1	Jordan Godwin	1019 points
2	Jay Thomas	942
3	Charlie Mills	904
4	Christopher Bayliss	856
5	Jack Weaver	835
6	Jack Aldridge	795

### BW85cc

1	Luke Dean	1017 points
2	Matthew Bayliss	981
3	Josh Brine	963
4	Jordan Divall	797
5	Toby Harkness	793
6	Liam Wright	773

### SENIORS

1	Connor Wakely	1035 points
2	Oliver Rusby	955
3	Harry McKenna	912
4	Alex Hussey	888
5	Ryan Williams	805
6	Ryan Pryer	756

# MAX!

## ANSTIE JUNIOR HANGS OUT AT HANGTOWN...

Words by Max Anstie Photo by Suffy

First up at Laguna Seca we watched Neil Hodgson kick arse and scrub the superbike round the corkscrew. It was cool to see the technology put into the bikes even if they don't jump! I've been talking to Kurt Nicoll and hopefully we can get out some time on the supermoto and that RC8 superbike.

So after some Brit action 100 miles down the road on superbikes it was my turn up at the famous Hangtown track in Sacramento. The Dodge Amateur National is run over six days – one practice, four qualifiers and the final day is the Mains. Because they have so many classes/riders it has to be over six days. Not like your BYMX ha ha. Personally I don't like the amateur programme over here, I think the European and Dutch championships are much better for getting you ready for going pro.

It's so intense for the five laps you do in the US amateur races. When I first came over a year ago it was like as soon as you started to settle down and get into it the race was over. Coming from doing the European championships with 25-minute motos it was quite a bit different. What I have learned from racing over here is how to make the first lap as fast as the last. Balancing it out, coming from the European side of things with 25-minute motos and then getting into the American style of five-lap sprints will give anyone an edge when jumping up to the pro level.

I suppose Loretta's is the only one with maybe eight laps which makes it more fun. Normally you would think that doing three five-lap races would be really easy but it's the mental stress you have to keep to a minimum which tires you out.

Anyway, back to Dodge... It was my first time at the Hangtown track and I was surprised at how small it was! They had dumped tons and tons of rice seeds on the track which held the water but felt really weird while riding! Kinda like sand. I was going in pretty relaxed as always and I felt a little strange in practice but that was partly because I hadn't ridden an outdoor track in two weeks due to SX training (for Bercy and Sheffield). I did two laps of practice knowing that it would be totally different when it came to the race and spent the rest of the 15 minutes looping this fun triple thing trying to pull fatty whips.

Nikki (Mary Jane from Mammoth's step sister) went really fast and I rode good in all my heats and was having loads of fun. The finals also went really well, I took the 125 two-stroke championship and a few seconds as well. All in all a really good week being that it was my first all big bike race.

Coming back from northern CA all I could think about was being at Sheffield, going to the cinema before my final like usual – ha ha – and that it has been a year since I stepped on my first KTM a week before the SX!

MAX



Fancy starring on a Rage playing card of your very own? Check out Josh and OJ's details, substitute their info for yours and send everything in along with a decent photo to the postal address on page 21. If you've got a digital pic

(between two and four meg only please) email it along with your details to [rage@dirtbikerider.co.uk](mailto:rage@dirtbikerider.co.uk)

Got a story for Rage? Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at [mike@ragextra.co.uk](mailto:mike@ragextra.co.uk)



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# DREAMDEBUT!

AWESOME FIRST TERM IN SW85s FOR MIGHTY MICKEY...

**T**he battle for Small Wheel supremacy in this year's BYMX competition has been one of the most enthralling of recent years with any of five guys in with a real shout at various times throughout the season.

Right from the very off with all the arguments after Desertmartin and Mildenhall it seems this year's competition has been destined to be eventful. The series had more twists and turns than a bowl of spaghetti laced with some real heartache and drama that included front runners Ben Howell and James Dunn both crashing out for periods of motorcycle emptiness that robbed them of their chances of glory.

Add to all of that the blistering form and confidence shown by last year's 65cc upgrades and this year's seven rounds have definitely been more than a bit on the explosive side.

The final roll of the dice came at Longdon as 11-year-old Mickey Eccles from Pontefract in West Yorkshire still had a few grenades to lob in a real 'do or die' effort trying to wrestle the championship crown from 12-year-old Jordan Godwin's grasp. It was a real tall order and at the end of the day Michael had to settle for the runner-up spot after giving it big green licks and pulling back more than half of the 65-point deficit on Jordan going into the finale.

Following Michael's sixth place finish last

term in the 65s this was a sensational result in his first season of red plate action. Any position within the top six would have been a real result but finishing second exceeded all his dreams.

Michael started his rise on the national scene by winning the YMSA Auto title in '04 aboard the Kawasaki and has stayed loyal to Team Green ever since. Competing in BYMX since '05, Michael has set his sights on mixing home-based events with European action for '09 with the Dutch Big Wheel series high on the wish list.

Team Eccles realise only too well it will be a really tough challenge with the top guys out there some 10 seconds a lap quicker right now. It's a steep learning curve but the youngster is keen to ride it. If all goes well, learning from the top guys and closing the gap on the very best in Europe as well as competing in home events is the masterplan for next season.

Michael has a real love for the dynamic sand racing that the Dutch circuits provide and just to underline that fact his best ride of the year came at Leuchars. Starting in fifth place, Michael sliced through the leaders to eventually take the chequers some 14 seconds clear of the chasers.

Team Eccles would like to say a huge thanks to all their sponsors this year and also to ace spannerman Wesley who has not missed a race in six years.

*It's been a great season for Michael Eccles*



Connor flies on the four-banger



## CUBES FOR CONNOR!

WALKLEY GETS A FOUR-BANGER

**C**onnor Walkley is no stranger to success. This year's BYMX 'rookie of the year' award and the BSMA Senior title are the latest two prizes in a long list of national accolades that stretch back to 2005 as Connor ran off with the BSMA Junior 65cc crown.

Stepping up into an older – and very much harder – category is not exactly the easiest path to youth silverware on an annual basis. But then again Connor is no ordinary kid and rewriting the rulebook is becoming second nature to him.

At 14 years old, six foot tall and 11 stone in weight his build – coupled with an ice-cool racing brain and temperament – makes the package just about as good as it gets in the MX potential stakes. In the past two seasons both Mel Pocock and Scott Elderfield have set the bar at an

incredible height for the under 16s and before them Ray Rowson and Ashley Greedy were champions at the same age.

Next season will be a real biggie for Connor as he attempts to be the youngest winner of the top youth prizes in recent times. Ever since Connor left the Small Wheel ranks in '06 he's been pleading for more horsepower and cubes to hurtle his talent around more competitively and finally the day has arrived.

Yep, the under-powered two-stroke can be relegated to history as for next season and the rest of this one Connor has got his dabs all over Team Green's 250F. He did enough in qualifying at Brookthorpe recently to give an awesome glimpse of just how bright his future is looking aboard a four-banger...

SPOTLIGHT ON...

### CURTIS BLAMEY

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**A**fter suffering a ruptured spleen at the back end of '07 and a broken wrist at the Desertmartin BYMX opener this season, 11-year-old Curtis Blamey will be hoping for an injury-free charge at next year's SW85cc competitions.

Curtis is yet another product of the South Wales academy that seems to produce more than its fair share of top-flight young motocrossers. Riding the Honda 150F for the third season on the bounce next year, Curtis could well prove to be a real dark horse and possible spoiler in the championship stakes.

Over the past two seasons Curtis has been a real holedshot junkie at nationals. More often than not you'll find him right in there mixing it up at turn one with the prize guys so don't be too surprised if he makes it stick all the way to the

flag a few times in '09.

Curtis started out his national racing days on the Kawasaki 65cc machine in '06 but soon switched allegiance when the Honda four-banger came onto the market and you have to say it's been a successful marriage of two really smooth operators. At the final round of the BYMX at Longdon he posted the second fastest time in qualifying and recently finished fifth on Weston Beach in front of national champ Jordan Godwin just to underline his confidence levels right now.

Although next year will be year three in the SW division, Curtis will still be much the same age as most of the guys around him and all the experience he's gained in the hard slog of previous terms against mainly older opposition could well prove priceless.

Over the winter months Curtis will be a regular in the winter championships at Wilden Lane and Polesworth and looking forward to next season it's a big thanks to mum and dad, sponsors Moto Pross, 1st Stop Rail Solutions, Danger UK and last but not least the South Wales legend that is Big Dai for all their help and support.





# MACKPACKER!

IN THE FIRST OF A TWO-PART HOLIDAY SPECIAL, BILLY AND DOOGS  
JET OFF TO THAILAND FOR SOME MUCH-NEEDED R N' R...

Words and pics by **Billy MacKenzie**

**I** made it, I'm home! After five weeks doing a bit of globetrotting I'm home in one piece! There were a few doubters out there that said I wouldn't make it back alive – especially with Dougan as my wing man – but after the Nations it was all engines go and straight to Thailand for the first part of our tour!

I arrived at Jase's house with just my Fox backpack, the kind you take to school every day, while he was there packing his suitcase! After a few words he joined me in the backpack adventure and we both set off for Heathrow with only our school bags and our eagerness to experience what lay ahead!

Originally, it had been decided that father Dougan would take us to the airport but as I found out in true Jason Dougan fashion he hadn't asked his old man and we drove there ourselves. I wasn't keen on leaving my van in the parking for five weeks but we had no other choice so I thought I'd be smart and park it in short stay, then on my return just follow someone out under the barrier – but we'll get to that next month...

Let me just take a second to warn people reading this column that these five weeks are the **ONLY** five weeks I have off in the whole year so if anyone is going to judge then don't read anymore!

The Monster party was a huge success at Dono and it was so cool to party with all my fellow racers and mates like I mentioned in the last column – and the next five weeks would be no different! We landed in Bangkok ready to go, the sun had just gone down and I wanted to find out what Bangkok was all about. I'd heard the stories and I wanted to see it for myself.

The taxi driver took us straight to the tourist office which was the best thing to do as it turned out – we had the whole 16 days in Thailand completely sorted out for us in half-an-hour. The guy had booked us hotels, beach huts, flights, boat rides, buses – everything for only £250 each for 16 days! Unbelievable! So with that safe in our minds that we didn't have to hunt round for hotels

and stuff we headed straight out to town to see what it was all about.

We spent three nights in Bangkok and that was probably just about right – maybe two nights would have been better? It's a crazy city – no rules, very dirty and you have to be on your guard for getting ripped off all the time. The taxi drivers are the worst but also the bar guides that try pull you into the clubs, only to be hit with a 1000 Baht entry bill as soon as you step foot in there! So it was pretty crazy and I'll wrap it up quickly. We had tuk tuk races, we met some very interesting people, there were a few unsavoury characters with tits walking around, we drank a lot and I met a nice girl! There was a massive thunderstorm on the last night which was really cool – I love thunderstorms and this one was big!

We made our way back from the club dancing in the rain – it was a cool experience. Bangkok is a city that never sleeps – but we needed to. We woke up in the morning with a pretty rock star room – I thought it would be a good idea to make dens and tents out of our beds so in the morning it looked like there had been a rock band staying the night! Ha ha!

Off to Koh Samui next. We got a 'VIP' bus with a load of other backpackers – originally I had thought about buying an old wreck of a car and driving down myself figuring it would take six hours but we got the bus instead. We didn't know it but it was an overnight bus so me and Jase were both sat wide awake waiting on the bus stopping after about six hours. However, it took 12 so it wasn't very pleasant and no-one really chatted – I expected everyone to be singing and cracking jokes but it was pretty crap. It seemed to go on forever but eventually we stepped foot on a boat in gorgeous turquoise waters and made our way over to the island.

Thailand is truly a beautiful country and the islands were awesome, the water so clear and the beaches so white. We arrived at a little beach hut where we would

be staying for the next six nights. It was small and only cost £10 a night but that's what I had pictured before the trip commenced. We hired out a scooter and we were off exploring the island. We done a whole lap of the island by mistake trying to find the main beach strip which we would find out later was only 2km in the opposite direction. It got dark and we ended up at Lamai Beach with no clue to where we were but the place was kicking off, lots off little bars with lots and lots of Thai girls! Jackpot!

All I had were flip flops and shorts on at the time so we made about getting some cheap clothes quick sharp, then had a really awesome meal at a very small cafe thing. Our main meal cost us 70p each and it was really lovely food! We'd make this our dinner place for the next few days with an occasional Big Mac!

As we cruised by the bars we literally had to swerve to avoid the girls from grabbing us – they run out and stand in front of your scooter to try get you into their bars. There are old guys walking round with two or three girls with them – it's pretty weird to see but as we would find out it's normal over here! The next six days were all pretty much the same and we went back and forth from the two main beach strips. We met up with two Newcastle boys called Dave and Adam who we had met in a club in Bangkok and we changed our sleeping patterns so that we could maximise the fun time! We worked it out that there was a dull moment in the day – from 2pm until midnight – so this would be our sleeping time! It meant we could join the parties at the busiest time and be awake for sunrise and breakfast every morning!

It was working well, we were out and about every night, meeting lots of new people from all over. We went to one of the busiest tourist backpacker places in Chaweng Beach where we ended up meeting a couple of cute girls and having a drink with them. They were travelling in a big group so eventually we had a good 10



of us all sitting round exchanging stories. There were little girls running round with Connect 4 challenging everyone and when I say little they were from six to 14 so naturally you think you can beat them. But they are professionals and you lose all your money! It's 100 Baht a time for a game of Connect 4, then they double or quit you and everything – 100 Baht is like £2.50 and I lost about 500 (and so did the other 10 who were with me)!

Then there are the scummy guys that try to rip you off for everything. On this one occasion we were all ordering buckets (vodka, Sprite and energy drink in a bucket) – the guy said they would be 300 Baht each so we all agreed. He came over with six buckets then demanded 400 each from us. I dunno what I done to get this guy revved up but it was a scary moment in my trip. I told him I ain't paying 400 and he can take it back – as did a good four other people – but for some reason he took a disliking to me and offered me out for a fight!

It was pretty scary – I was lying down on a sun lounge thing and he was stood above me talking Thai with a look in his eye that only wanted to fight! I s\*\*t myself cos as soon as the commotion kicked off it wasn't just him, there were about 10 other Thai guys that just appeared from nowhere and surrounded all of us with this guy's main focus being on me! Luckily we managed to calm the situation down but for a moment I thought it was all gonna kick off and it wasn't the last time I saw this happen on the trip!

We had a lot of nights drinking – I think in all, including the Nations party, we had been drunk for 11 days – and one afternoon it caught up with me and Jase. We tried to get some sleep but kept hearing lots of weird noises outside our beach hut – neither of us could sleep and we decided we had roughed it enough for the time being and booked ourselves into an awesome hotel, the kind that would cost you £500 a night in the UK. But this only cost us £60 each! So we

booked up for four days and let Dave and Adam sleep in our little beach hut.

We had some really cool times in Koh Samui – we swam in the sea as the sun came up with a bunch of Irish girls and a few cool lads, we went to a really cool house party by a beautiful lake, Jason fell in love with a blonde Thai girl, we listened to a lot of live bands that played in the clubs, we saw the island, met some pretty weird dudes outside McDonalds and then it was time to leave and head to the main attraction – Kah Panghan for the full moon party!

It was the same again! We had six days on another island and this one was defo not as tourist friendly as Koh Samui but I liked that. We had to make our own adventures and again we stayed in a little beach hut beside the sea. When we arrived it was a bit of a hole – I didn't fancy staying there at all – but it was a 'don't judge a book by its cover' kinda situation. We had already booked it but I wanted to go. The guy – called Kong! – who owned the place came over and was really cool, he chatted away and basically said you can go if you want but we'll keep your room for you in case you change your mind.

The guy seemed totally genuine – he ran the place with his family and left the choice up to us. I felt a little bad so I sat down for a drink and a chat with the other guys staying there. I only chatted for 10 minutes and I liked the vibe I got so we stayed for a few nights. It was a really cool atmosphere and, like I said, he was a really genuine guy and what the rooms lacked he made up for with his little bar area. Every night he had some cool music on as everyone laid down on the decking in front of the bar overlooking the ocean – it was perfect. A nice change from the madness that had occurred in Koh Samui. This is how I pictured our trip, it was beautiful and relaxing – but that didn't last long! We were in Koh Panghan for the full moon party!

For weeks before my trip I had been researching

this party so I knew what to expect and it didn't let my expectations down! On the build-up to the full moon the beach was still stacked every night with lots of people from all over the world, the weather was fantastic every day and even at night it was still super warm. The beach was beautiful – about half-a-mile long with lots of little beach hut club type things that have the beach as the dance floor. We were still with Dave and Adam and even Johnny Hamilton made the trip over just for the full moon! Each night was pretty much the same – nothing crazy really happened, it was all very chilled out and a good party. Then the full moon party came and the population multiplied!

There were at least 10,000 people on the night of the full moon and it was crazy! Me and Dave were running round covered in neon body paint, I had a crazy frog helmet that I had bought the day before, we had sweat bands, neon glasses, the lot! There were so many people all dancing and enjoying themselves, it was so exotic! However, you really did need to be drunk to enjoy it I think and as the night wore on a few people didn't know when to stop.

As the sun came up if you looked back on the beach it was pretty messy. But if you looked out to the ocean it was the most magnificent thing you've ever seen. The colours that meet the ocean and the sky are unbelievable, like a massive chrome plate stretching for miles across with a purple orange line that looks like the earth just drops off. It's truly one of the most amazing places I've ever seen, like the beach was meant for this full moon party! And what I liked about it most was that everybody there were there for a good time – to talk, to meet people, to enjoy themselves. No-one was there looking for trouble – you could chat to anyone!

**Next month – Billy's off to Oz!**





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